

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 30 March 2016.

PRESENT: Councillors Bloundele, (Chair), The Mayor, D Budd, Arundale, Biswas, Blyth, Brady, Brunton, Carr, Cole, Coupe, Cox, Davison, Goodchild, Harvey, Hellaoui, Higgins, C Hobson, J Hobson, Hubbard, Hussain, Lawton, Lewis, McGee, McGloin, McIntyre, McTigue, G Purvis, P Purvis, Rathmell, C M Rooney, D Rooney, Rostron, Saunders, Shan, Taylor, Thompson, Uddin, J A Walker, N J Walker, Walters and Young

OFFICERS: M Allinson, R Broad, L Henman, A Hoy, J Lewis, S Lightwing, A Pain, B Roberts and M Robinson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dean, Dryden, Mawston, McCabe and Sharrocks.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item/Nature of Interest
Councillor Saunders	Pecuniary	Agenda Item 14 - Proposed Method of Restitution for Vehicle Proprietor and Private Hire Operator Charges

1 **MINUTES 17 FEBRUARY, 2 MARCH AND 16 MARCH**

The minutes of the meetings of Middlesbrough Council held on 17 February, 2 March and 16 March 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Announcements/Communications for this meeting.

NOTED

3 **PETITION - BINK STREET CAR PARK**

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, received a petition from residents expressing concerns regarding littering at Bink Street Car Park. The lead petitioner's representative addressed the Council seeking the Council's support to improve the present situation.

The Executive Member for Environment acknowledged receipt of the petition and agreed to contact the relevant Officers to ascertain whether any assistance could be given.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** that the petition be received, noted and forwarded for consideration.

4 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

The Mayor provided a brief update on the budget, the Combined Authority and asylum seekers and refugees.

In the recent budget statement the Chancellor had announced changes to its education policy and confirmed that in future all schools would convert to academies. In relation to the Government's Welfare Policy, proposed changes had been rescinded soon after they were announced and the future policy was at present unclear.

The Mayor also referred to his previous comments in relation to the withdrawal of the Revenue Support Grant in 2019/2020 and the Government proposal that Local Authorities'

main sources of income would come from the collection of Council Tax and business rates. However, the Mayor noted that tax relief on rates for small businesses had been cut in the latest budget, which would equate to a reduction in that source of income to Middlesbrough Council of approximately £1.3 million. This would have a serious detrimental effect on the Council's finances unless the deficit was met by Central Government. The Mayor also voiced concern at the proposals for the Fairer Funding Formula for schools and how this might affect Middlesbrough schools in future.

With regard to Devolution, the Mayor confirmed that Orders had been passed by Parliament and the Combined Authority would come into existence from 1 April 2016. Following further discussions with Government Minister and the other Tees Valley Leaders, the Mayor was pleased to report that he felt some progress had been made on the way forward.

Finally the Mayor spoke about the number of asylum seekers and refugees that had been welcomed to Middlesbrough. The Mayor acknowledged that this was a sensitive issue and that there had been a great deal of mis-information and speculation circulating both locally and nationally. Three meetings had taken place with Home Office officials in an attempt to improve this situation. The Home Office had confirmed that the number of asylum seekers settling in Middlesbrough by the end of 2016 would be no more than 690, a reduction from the previous peak of approximately 1000. A senior Government official was due to visit Middlesbrough in April to look at the education and health provision for asylum seekers, as well as the housing provided and whether or not this was suitable.

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) Orange Pip Market

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Regeneration was congratulated on the creation of the Orange Pip Market. This was a brand new monthly artisan street food market which would be launched on Saturday 28 May 2016 in Baker Street. The Deputy Mayor responded that the Council had a longer term ambition for a larger market and this would be a good start. People were keen to be involved and create a hub of world-wide food offers. The Deputy Mayor hoped the market would continue to grow and develop.

(b) Grove Hill Developer Procurement

A Member commented that the house prices in the Grove Hill area of Middlesbrough had increased recently and asked the Deputy Mayor whether this was due to the Council's interventions. The Deputy Mayor agreed that the Council had played its part in the regeneration of Grove Hill and this could have influenced house prices. The Deputy Mayor added that prices were also fluctuating in other areas of the town.

(c) Best Beginnings

Reference was made to the Best Beginnings Launch, a scheme providing resources to expectant and new parents across South Tees. The Member commented that she looked forward to Middlesbrough providing many more accessible areas for nursing mothers and becoming a more breast-feeding friendly town. The Executive Member for Communities and Public Health fully endorsed the comments made and acknowledged the recent work of the Health Scrutiny Panel in encouraging and promoting breast-feeding, which it appeared had sadly become unfashionable in recent times.

(d) Council Tax Collection - Impact of Government Policy

A Member asked for clarification on the reasons for non payment of Council Tax in Middlesbrough. The Executive Member for Finance and Governance explained that non payment of Council Tax was not just an issue in Middlesbrough but a national problem. The problem was not the willingness or ability of the Council to collect the tax but rather the ability of some of the most financially vulnerable people to pay it. People were not choosing not to pay; they simply did not have the means to do so. Some people had to choose whether to put food on the table, clothe their children or pay their bills. The introduction of the Bedroom Tax, Universal Credit and increase in unemployment locally due to the loss of the SSI works had all added to the situation.

(e) OFSTED Single Inspection Framework

The Executive Member for Children's Social Services was congratulated on the recent OFSTED inspection of Children's Services which had judged that Middlesbrough Council had a clear commitment to children and young people and ensured those in its care were safe.

The Executive Member thanked the Member for her comments and added his thanks to all those involved in the care of Middlesbrough's children. The Executive Member went on to highlight several aspects of the inspection report including the positive comments in relation to the Fostering and Adoption Service and the Senior Leaders' and Social Workers' commitment and positivity towards working in Middlesbrough.

An Action Plan in response to the OFSTED report was currently being developed to address the areas for improvement that had been highlighted. These areas included the collection of data and ensuring that children's views were listened to and acted upon. Consultation events were being held to ensure that the views of all those involved in the service were included in the action planning. The Action Plan would be available by the end of April or beginning of May.

The Executive Member was also pleased to report that the Mayor had received a letter from the Minister for Children and Families recognising the good practice in Middlesbrough and congratulating the Authority on the OFSTED inspection.

Finally, the Executive Member wished to place on record his thanks to Neil Pocklington, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, who was retiring from the Authority. Neil had brought stability and good sense to the Authority during the last six years and his leadership had greatly contributed to the strong outcomes identified by OFSTED. Members indicated their agreement that Neil had made a fantastic contribution to both Middlesbrough Council and the children in its care.

(f) Performance Information

It was noted that there were currently 379 children looked after by Middlesbrough Council. A Member asked for a breakdown of how many were in foster placements and how many were in residential care.

The Executive Member confirmed that 49 children were currently in a variety of residential placements in Middlesbrough and also out of area. Approximately 40 children were cared for within their own families, and half the remaining number were cared for by Middlesbrough foster carers and the other half by foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies.

(g) Tour De Yorkshire Update

A Member congratulated the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport and all those involved in the preparations for the forthcoming Tour De Yorkshire Stage 3, which would be hosted in Middlesbrough over the May Bank Holiday weekend. The involvement of Community Councils, schools, individuals and other community groups to date was praised and the Member urged everyone to get involved in the event. The Executive Member agreed that everyone was working hard to make the event a success. As well as the short term benefits, it was hoped that the Tour would provide a long lasting

legacy to Middlesbrough in the form of an annual amateur race. The Executive Member was also delighted with the involvement and enthusiasm of so many individuals and organisations. The Executive Member added that the Tour was a fantastic opportunity to showcase everything that was good about Middlesbrough.

(h) MIMA

It was highlighted that the Council currently owned approximately £18 million worth of art work that was in storage. The Executive Member was asked to give consideration to selling some of this art work and using the receipts to provide counselling and support to children and their families who were suffering the effects of mental health issues.

The Executive Member stated that the two items went hand in hand and art could be used in positive ways to work with those with mental health problems. The Executive Member added that he would rather see the art work used in that way than for it to be sold.

(i) Orange Pip Market

Reference was made to the number of people showing confidence and investing in Middlesbrough. The Member asked whether this type cultural regeneration and refuelling of the town was driving growth and prosperity. The Executive Member agreed that cultural prosperity and economic growth went hand-in-hand. Bedford and Baker Streets and the introduction of the Orange Pip Market were part of that in terms of bringing investment into the town and promoting Middlesbrough as the cultural hub of the Tees Valley.

(j) Southlands Update

A Member stated that he was pleased to see that the Southlands Centre would remain open as a community facility until August 2016. However, in relation to the transfer of the leisure facility to Sports Leisure Management (SLM) on 1 April 2016, the Member voiced concern that some of the current administrative posts had been deleted and the work transferred to SLM's head office in Leicester. The Member asked whether the Executive Member was aware that some staff would lose their jobs and others would be transferred to work in sales.

The Executive Member replied that the Council had worked with SLM to match existing staff with new roles under the new arrangement. With regard to the comments made, the Executive Member agreed to seek further clarification on this issue and refer back to the Member.

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

Since the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had submitted their apologies for the meeting, it was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** that the report was **DEFERRED**.

7 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions for this meeting.

NOTED

8 **MOTION NO. 118**

Consideration was given to the following Motion, moved by The Mayor and seconded by Councillor Carr:

'This Council supports the principle of a European Union dedicated to achieving economic prosperity, social justice, peace and security. We support a Europe which works for people, through institutions which are democratically accountable.

We note that the European Union brings investment in employment and infrastructure, and

protection of British workers, consumers and the environment. We believe that it provides a framework for European trade and cooperation in the 21st century.

In particular, we note the importance of the European Union for the regional economy. We gain much more than we contribute, and EU support for business in Middlesbrough and the North East sustains many thousands of local jobs.

For these reasons, this Council firmly believes that the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union.'

An amendment was moved by Councillor C Hobson and seconded by Councillor Cox for the motion to be withdrawn.

The amendment was put to the vote.

On a vote being taken the amendment was declared **LOST**.

The substantive motion was then put.

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

9 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2016/2017**

A report of the Executive Director, Commercial and Corporate Services, was presented to submit the 2016-2017 Pay Policy Statement for consideration and approval.

A copy of the Pay Policy Statement 2016-2017 was attached to the submitted report at Appendix 1.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** that the Pay Policy Statement 2016-2017 was approved.

10 **REVIEW OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was presented seeking approval of a revised copy of the Council's Constitution, associated amendments to the Schedule of External Appointments and the delegation as set out in the submitted report.

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

1. The revised Middlesbrough Council Constitution was approved.
2. Authority was delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make such alterations to the Senior Management Structure and/or Job Titles, recorded in the Constitution, as may from time to time become necessary.
3. The Terms of Reference of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee were amended.

11 **PROPOSED METHOD OF RESTITUTION FOR VEHICLE PROPRIETOR AND PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR CHARGES**

A report of the Executive Director, Economic Development and Communities was presented to seek approval for the proposed method of making restitution to vehicle proprietors and private hire operators, following the unlawful cross-subsidy of drivers' fees.

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

1. Council approved the rationale and parameters for providing restitution to vehicle proprietors and private hire operators as detailed in the submitted report.
2. Council noted and approved the reimbursement of licensing fees to the value outlined.

12 **ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

A report of the Director of Economic Development and Communities was presented to inform

the Council of revisions made to its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), following amendments by the Government in 2012 to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations.

A copy of the revised Statement of Community Involvement was attached to the submitted report. Appropriate consultation had been carried out, details of which were included in the submitted report.

Council was requested to approve and adopt the amended SCI in accordance with the above Regulations.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** as follows, that the revised Statement of Community Involvement was approved and adopted, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

13 **MORTGAGE INTEREST RATE REPORT**

A report of the Executive Director, Commercial and Corporate Services was presented to seek Council's approval to set the Local Average Interest Rate for the six months commencing 1 April 2016.

Details of the proposed interest rate were contained in the submitted report and it was noted that there was an increase from the interest rate used in the last period.

It was noted, there were currently three mortgages outstanding, one of which would come to a close in five months' time.

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

1. That the Local Average Interest Rate for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 be set at 5.266%.
2. This rate would be used for all Housing Mortgages for this period.

14 **COUNCIL DIARY 2016/2017**

The Head of Legal Services presented a report to request approval of the draft programme of Council Committee meeting dates for the Municipal Year 2016-2017. A copy of the proposed dates was attached at Appendix A to the submitted report.

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

1. The timetable of meetings for the Municipal Year 2016-2017, as detailed in Appendix A to the submitted report, be approved.
2. That, with the exception of the following, the dates for ordinary meetings of the Council be designated as meetings at which questions would be taken from members of the public:

- Budget/Council Tax Setting Meeting - Wednesday 1 March 2017.
- Annual Meeting - Wednesday 17 May 2017.