

**MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 19 October 2016.

**PRESENT:** Councillors S E Bloundele (Chair), R Brady (Vice-Chair), R Arundale, J Blyth, J Brunton, Mr D Budd, M Carr, J G Cole, D P Coupe, P Cox, D Davison, S Dean, J Goodchild, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, C Hobson, J Hobson, B A Hubbard, N Hussain, T Lawton, L Lewis, T Mawston, D McCabe, J McGee, L McGloin, J McTigue, G Purvis, P Purvis, J Rathmell, C M Rooney, J Rostron, M Saunders, J Sharrocks, B E Taylor, M Thompson, Z Uddin, J A Walker, N J Walker, M Walters and L Young

**OFFICERS:** M Allinson, J Bromiley, B Carr, K Flynn, L Henman, A Hoy, E Ioannides, E Kunonga, A Pain, K Parkes, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, B Roberts, E Scollay

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Councillor S Biswas, Councillor D J Branson, Councillor E Dryden, Councillor T Harvey, Councillor F McIntyre, Councillor D Rooney.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

**1 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 7 SEPTEMBER 2016**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 September 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

5 (d) Museums

That the wording of the second paragraph be amended to the following:

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport stated that he had not been aware that the Dresser campaign had approached the Council for assistance, but that he would be happy to meet with the family and the Councillor to discuss ways in which the Council might be able to assist.

**NOTED****2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Announcements/Communications for this meeting.

The Chair of the Council reminded members of the public that the Council meeting was a formal meeting of the Council, and whilst members of the public were welcome to attend, they were not permitted to take part in the meeting.

**3 MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

The Mayor provided an update in respect of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). Members were advised that since the last meeting of the TVCA the first tranche of funding for the current financial year amounting to £15m, had been received from the Government. The funding would be used towards supporting existing schemes such as:

- supporting more young people into work to acquire the skills they require;
- improving outcomes in education;
- assisting people with multiple barriers to find good quality jobs;
- extending high speed broadband with the aim of reaching 98% of the whole area within the next few years;
- supporting growth sectors in the economy;
- developing cultural assets in the economy;

- creating viable business cases for major infrastructure schemes e.g. plan for the Tees Crossing; improved station at Darlington to facilitate HS2; better A66 East/West route and the electrification of rail.

In the next few months the first Mayoral Development Corporation outside of London would be created which would cover the SSI/South Tees wider site industrial area which was semi-derelict at the moment.

The TVCA had carried out consultation with businesses over the previous few weeks. Over the previous twenty years, local authorities had been working together alongside business organisations, businesses and education establishments, both further and higher. A meeting had been held with the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors, the Entrepreneurs Forum and the Engineering Employers federation to examine how the organisations could get involved and how they were best able to inform their members.

There was still a question over what would happen with European Funding and what would replace European Funding, following Brexit. There had been buy-in from many Government departments but less from others. Local authorities were being encouraged by the Government to think about what their authority wanted following Brexit. Local authorities needed to ascertain how much influence they would have over Government budgets that they were not currently involved in. The five authorities were due to have a meeting with Sajid Khan, the Minister for the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Mayor referred to a recent attack on a Councillor's property and advised that the behaviour of the people that had carried out the attack was unacceptable and he offered his sympathy to the Member affected by the attack. The Mayor also commented on the behaviour of a small amount of people in respect of posts placed on social media.

The Mayor referred to recent reports in the media in respect of the sale of Council assets that had caused distress to Members, Officers and investors in the town and clarified the position in respect of the following:

#### **Acklam Hall**

- Valued at £1m in 2008 and £622k in 2013 and sold for £907k.
- £300k received - remainder to be received by July 2018 at the latest.
- Internal Audit investigation found that there was an acceptable control environment, but that there were a number of improvements that could be made to improve consistency.

#### **TAD Centre**

- Valued at £523k in July 2014. Sold for £400k. Highest bid received - £358k.
- Sold on the basis of purchaser investing £800k to improve the building.
- Internal Audit investigation found that there was nothing to suggest that officers were not acting in the best interests of the Council.

#### **Craft Centre**

- Sold for £50k - Highest legitimate bid - £75k
- £50k bid offered further financial return in the form of Business Rates at £17k per annum, which the £75k bid did not provide.
- Internal Audit Investigation found that evidence was available to support the selection of the successful bidder and that a legitimate process had been carried out.

#### **Captain Cook Birthplace Museum**

- There were currently no proposals or plans to close the CCBM or to merge it with any other facility.
- There had been no 'Final Report' on the future of the museum - a possible merger had

been one of a number of options put forward in an appraisal commissioned as part of a major review of the Council's cultural services offer. The report contained no binding recommendations, and had not resulted in any change to the way the town's museums operated. The options were drawn up when a budget saving of £1.3m was required from cultural services. The figure had been subsequently reduced to £150k and this had been agreed by Council.

- The 'tour' by Askham Bryan staff never took place.

### **Centre Square**

- The area known as Centre Square, bounded by the Town Hall, Holiday Inn Express, Mima and the Bottle of Notes was one of the biggest civic spaces of its kind in the UK. It had hosted many events including the Olympic Torch Relay in 2012 and the Tour de Yorkshire earlier in the year. There were no plans to build upon this area. The proposed development would be at the eastern and northern fringes of the square, and would add to, not detract from, the amenity.
- This development would be backed by private investment, and the Council would not be making a contribution of £12m.

The Mayor referred to the two Members of the Council that had raised issues surrounding the sale of Council assets and the proposed future of the CCBM. He advised that none of the two Councillors had provided any evidence to support their allegations and he suggested that they should retract the allegations regarding the sale of Council assets, apologise and consider resigning.

The Mayor was interrupted a number of times whilst delivering his report and the Chair requested those members of the public interrupting the proceedings, to desist or leave the meeting. Following repeated requests for certain members of the public to refrain from interrupting the meeting, the Chair announced that the meeting would be adjourned, and members of the public were requested to leave the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.20pm.

The meeting reconvened at 8.00pm.

The Chair requested if there were any questions or comments in relation to the Mayor's statement.

A Member commented that Members had received a presentation from the Chief Executive which clarified the situation in respect of the sale of each of the assets that the Mayor had referred to in his report and the two Councillors that had raised the issue of the sales had not asked any questions at that presentation. One of the two Councillors had indicated that he wished to ask a question in private. The Member stated, that to date, no evidence had been provided to support the two Councillors' allegations.

The Member commented on the behaviour of one of the Councillors on social media, in particular personal comments that had been made. The Member suggested that as one of the Councillors was originally elected as a Labour Councillor, that he should resign and stand for re-election as an Independent.

The Member that had been subjected to personal attacks on his property stated that he wished to thank the Emergency Services for their actions in dealing with the attack and Councillors, staff, colleagues and family for their support following the incident.

The Member stated that over £500m had been invested in the town and the allegations in respect of the sale of Council assets were illegal and immoral and were unfair to officers, Councillors and investors in the town. He stated that the Councillors making allegations should consider their position as they had failed the Council and the people they claimed to represent.

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) Acklam Green

A Member welcomed the fact that Gleesons had bought the Acklam Green site from Bellways. He stated that he hoped that the regeneration and environment teams and Gleesons would work together to maintain the land in the proper manner.

b) Train Station Masterplan

A Member stated that he was happy to see that the Council were taking the lead in partnership with Network Rail in respect of the Train Station Masterplan. The Member commented that he would like to thank everyone involved including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive and Council staff.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Regeneration advised that it was anticipated that the Masterplan would be completed by 2017 and the Council would need to identify funding to bring the station back into full use.

c) Teesside Advanced Manufacturing Park (TAMP)

A Member commented that there were 1500 more companies based across the Tees Valley Area and she queried how many of those companies were based in Middlesbrough as a result of new development in the TAMP and Middlehaven and what it meant for the economy of Middlesbrough.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Regeneration advised that he had asked for further detail with regard to this issue and would provide the Member with the information. He advised that the number of businesses operating in Middlesbrough had grown by 538 (14.3%). He advised that TAMP had partnered with Middlesbrough College to deliver certifiable welder training at the college. The TWI were winning more work regionally including commercial work. A bid had been made to the Government for a manufacturing centre with the hope that it would be based in Middlesbrough.

A deal between Teesside University and James Cook University Hospital (JCUH) was close to being finalised to form a research partnership to work on medical devices which could assist in retaining key hospital staff.

TWI were involved with the MPI and the LEP with the support of Council officers to grow and retain steel research in the region.

d) Summer Reading Challenge

A Member queried how many people had attended the Summer Reading Challenge. The Executive Member for Communities and Public Health advised that the Summer Reading Challenge involved children aged between 4 and 11 being challenged to read six library books during the six week school holidays. A total of 867 children had signed up to the challenge and 52% had completed it compared to 44% for the previous year. The Executive Member acknowledged the work that officers did in assisting with the Reading Challenge.

e) Green Waste

A Member stated that he wished to congratulate the Executive Member for Environment in respect of the decision to extend the date for collection of green waste, but the Council's

website would need to be amended to reflect the change.

f) Flowers in Town Centre/Centre Square

A Member stated that he wished to congratulate the Executive Member for Environment and the officers concerned for the floral displays in the Town Centre and Centre Square as they had brightened the town up.

g) Reintroduction of Cylinder Mowers

A Member stated that he would like to congratulate the Executive Member for Environment and the officers concerned on the decision to reintroduce cylinder mowers for maintenance of small areas of grass.

h) Fly Tipping

A Member stated that he would like to congratulate the Executive Member for Environment on the new signage to tackle issues such as dog fouling and fly tipping. He also commented on the excellent initiative of Ward Walkabouts to discuss hotspots within Wards and he stated that he wished to congratulate the Executive Member, the Council staff and the area care staff for their work and commitment to the area.

i) Middlesbrough Schools Catering Service

A Member commented on the Gold Food4Health Award achieved by Middlesbrough Schools Catering Service. The Catering Manager had advised that the children received food containing no saturated fat and that most of the fresh food was sourced from the town. Only a small number of children now had packed lunches. The Member wished to congratulate the Schools Catering Service on their achievement.

j) Hardwick House

A Member commented on Hardwick House, the new supported housing project for veterans which was to be based in central Middlesbrough and he stated that he wished to thank the officers concerned in helping to get the project off the ground.

5 **REPORT ON IMPLICATIONS OF BRITISH EXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The Mayor advised that the report relating to the implications of the withdrawal of British membership of the European Union ('Brexit') had originally been written for the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

The compilation of the report had been a useful exercise in gathering information together from around the area. The first part of the report explored the national impact of Brexit. The Bank of England had recently released further predictions with regard to the potential impact.

The second part of the report was the part that had been submitted to the Tees Valley Combined Authority. This part of the report looked at funding and investment support and the implications for future exporting. The Tees Valley was a huge exporting area. The report also looked at foreign direct investment, attraction and retention of talent, and International knowledge transfer. At the current time, it was acknowledged that there were more questions than answers.

The final part of the report looked at the implications for the Council and the town and the initial mitigation activity.

The report was an introduction to the potential impact of Brexit and the Council and the Tees Valley Combined Authority would continue to monitor the situation because it was important that the authority be able to articulate to the Government what the authority needed once the implications of Brexit were known. Further updates would be provided when further information was received.

A number of Members commented with regard to the recent decision regarding the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union (Brexit).

**ORDERED** as follows:

1. That the Council note and support the actions being taken by the Tees Valley Combined Authority in respect of the potential impact on the local economy identified in the report.
2. That the Council note the additional potential implications for Middlesbrough and the Council's plans, and the initial mitigation activity agreed by the Executive, as outlined in the report.
3. That the Council receive further updates on Brexit and its various implications in due course, as the Government's plans are clarified and the potential impact of Brexit is better understood.

**6 REPORT OF 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. Members were advised that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor D Rooney and Councillor J Rathmell were members of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and as a result, future reports would include an update on the work of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board advised that she wished it to be noted that Councillor Rathmell had not, so far, attended a meeting of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**NOTED**

**7 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions for this meeting.

**NOTED**

**8 NOTICE OF URGENT MOTION**

There were no Urgent Motions. The proposer and seconder of the ordinary motion that had been submitted were not present at the meeting and therefore the motion was not put to the meeting.

**NOTED**

**9 CHANGE OF DATE FOR COUNCIL MEETING**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that there was no longer a requirement to change the date of the next Council meeting and therefore the next meeting of the Council was scheduled for 30 November 2016 at 7pm.

**NOTED**