

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 24 July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors J Hobson (Chair), L Garvey Vice-Chair, R Arundale, A Bell, D J Branson, C Cooke, B Cooper, D P Coupe, D Davison, S Dean, C Dodds, T Furness, J Goodchild, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, A High, S Hill, C Hobson, B A Hubbard, N Hussain, D Jones, C McIntyre, J McTigue, M Nugent, J Platt, E Polano, A Preston, G Purvis, J Rathmell, J Rostron, R M Sands, M Saunders, M L Smiles, M Storey, J Thompson, Z Uddin, J A Walker, S Walker, A Waters, G Wilson and C Wright

OFFICERS: A Allen, S Bonner, J Bromiley, B Carr, S Dorchell, R Grey, A Hoy, R Horniman, E Kunonga, D Johnson, A Pain, K Parkes, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, J Robinson, H Watson, A M Wilson and I Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillor L Lewis, Councillor T Mawston, Councillor D McCabe, Councillor D Rooney, Councillor D Smith, Councillor P Storey.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

1 MINUTES - ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS - 26 JUNE 2019

The minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings held on 26 June 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

There were no Announcements or Communications for this meeting.

3 COUNCIL QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chair invited the member of the public that had submitted Question 2/19 to read his question out. The Chair invited Councillor Rathmell to respond.

Councillor Rathmell queried what the cost would be to the public purse should the investigation not go ahead given the questions that had been raised about this issue previously. In terms of additional costs, the work that was involved in the process was already in line with the work of the auditors, so no additional work was required to be carried out. He advised that this could change dependant on what information the auditors fed back to the Committee. He advised that the Committee wanted to ensure that the Council was achieving value for money.

In terms of the cost of legal challenges, if it was a civil legal challenge, then Councillor Rathmell advised it would be wrong of him to try and guess the costs involved. If it was a criminal challenge then the CPS would deal with it. Councillor Rathmell advised that there would be no additional demands on Council officer's time as the issue had been delegated to him, as Chair of the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee and the internal auditors.

4 MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT

The Mayor advised that he wished to speak about the following issues:

Town Wide Clean-Up

The Mayor stated that hundreds of people had been involved in the Town-wide clean-up including Councillors, reggae stars, lawyers from Macks solicitors and members of the public. The Mayor urged Councillors and members of the public to get in touch, if they wished to be

involved in the clean-up.

New Homes in Central Middlesbrough

The Mayor advised that he was hoping to announce, in the very near future, the building of 150 - 200 high quality social housing homes in Central Middlesbrough.

Celebrating Middlesbrough's Sporting Heroes

The Mayor paid tribute to two local men who had achieved great success in their respective sports. Liam Plunkett, a cricketer, originally from Middlesbrough, had been part of the England cricket team that had won the cricket World Cup. Glen Durant, a Darts player also originally from the Tees Valley area, had reached the semi-finals of the Darts' World Match play event. He stated that the Council would organise appropriate celebrations for the two men and all the other high sports achievers in the town.

Members Allowances

The Mayor referred to the Members' Allowances Scheme and he stated that he was trying to cut the costs of the scheme, in order to save public money, and to make the system fairer. The report that had been submitted to Council had been withdrawn in order to provide Members with the opportunity to consult on the matter. He advised that his plan was to save up to £50,000 per year.

Political Assistants

The Mayor stated that he wished to look very closely, and make the public fully aware of the costs associated with the employment of political assistants. He stated that if the Council was going to have political assistants for political parties or groups, they needed to make sure that the public was 100% on board with that and that they understood what they were paying for.

Marton Crawl

The Mayor referred to the 'Marton Crawl'. He stated that he was currently working with the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland MP, Simon Clarke to provide a robust solution to the issue.

Tollesby Shops

The Mayor stated that the situation with regard to the state of the Tollesby Road shops was completely unacceptable. The shops had been boarded up for twelve years. The Council was currently in discussions with the landlord and the Chief Executive to provide a solution to this issue.

Holiday Hunger

The Mayor referred to the fact that some children who were in receipt of free school meals, often went hungry in the school summer holidays. The Council had allocated £25k in order to enable pilot schemes to operate and to fund projects aimed at providing meals for children in the school holidays. He stated that if the schemes worked, he hoped to plough more money in and seek funding from local businesses. The aim was to make Middlesbrough a 'Hunger Free' town.

A member thanked the Mayor for his statement. He stated that the clean-up of the town was important and he and his colleagues had been involved in the clean-up that had taken place in Centre Square. Members were also carrying out litter picking and clean-ups in their own Wards. He also stated that it was important that members of the public and local businesses were involved in helping to keep the town tidy.

In terms of the Mayor's announcement with regard to social housing, the member stated that he would be pleased to see MHomes involved in this process as it would bring revenue into

the town and would fill the gap in social housing that currently existed.

The Chair reminded members of the public not to interrupt members when they were speaking.

With regards to the Mayor's statement on Political Assistants, the member stated that he had concerns that the Mayor had referred to staff jobs as part of his statement. He emphasised that Political Assistants did an important job, and members needed to be cautious when talking about individual staff members livelihoods in a public arena as some were present at the meeting.

The member stated that he was pleased that the Mayor was supportive of taking the issue of Tollesby Road shops forward. The local MP and the previous administration had been involved in trying to bring this forward and he hoped that this would be something that MHomes could be part of in the future.

The Mayor advised that he had not changed his stance on building social housing in Middlesbrough. The Mayor stated that it was difficult to discuss jobs and he was not advocating that anyone should lose their jobs but thought it was important that the issue should be raised.

In terms of Tollesby Road shops, he stated that he was proud to play a part in remedying the issue.

A member commented that she had worked really hard for four years to try and bring about an improvement in the Tollesby Road shops area.

A member stated that he and his colleague had made the Mayor and the Chief Executive aware of their intention to propose that Liam Plunkett should receive the Freedom of the Borough of Middlesbrough because of his great achievement.

The Mayor stated that it was good to honour sporting achievements but that it should be debated by the Council and the town.

A member queried in respect of the Marton crawl, whether the road would be widened. The Mayor stated that he was not aware whether there were any plans to widen the road.

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 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).

The Chair advised that twenty eight Executive Member questions had been submitted. Given the size of the agenda, the Chair indicated that he had decided to limit the time for questions on Executive Member reports to thirty minutes. He requested questions and answers on the reports to be precise. Only one question per Member would be allowed in the first instance and if there was time left before the thirty minutes had elapsed, Members that had submitted a second question, would be given the opportunity to ask their second question.

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

Questions on the Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs Executive report.

a) Middlesbrough Alcohol Centre of Excellence (MACE)

Councillor Saunders queried where the Centre would be based. The Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs advised that it was proposed that the Centre would be based in Letitia House. The building had been used previously for a similar purpose for people suffering

with addictions. It was currently vacant and discussions were taking place with regard to using the building for this purpose with the person who held the long term lease.

Councillor Furness stated that he liked the approach to joining up the services. He stated that he saw a contradiction in respect of the possibility of the PSPO being in place and the redeployment of the homeless officers. The Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs advised there was a multitude of different parts of the question and they would need to be looked at on individual basis. He stated that the main aim was to ensure that troubled people were receiving a full wraparound of services. He advised that the Council was looking at developing a model that could look at a multitude of different issues for a particular person as substance misuse was never just the single issue they were facing. In terms of the issue of homeless officers, it was something that needed to be discussed. He advised that he would provide the member with information with regard to why the decision regarding the homeless officers was made.

Councillor Hill queried whether the finance associated with the MACE was as a result of a grant or a loan. The Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs advised that it was from the Public Health Capital Fund. Councillor Hill queried whether the Council could apply for repeat funding. The Executive Member advised that the funding was a one off capital funding grant and as such, the Council needed to be creative in enabling the continuation of provision of critical services in the long term. The Executive Member advised that the Public Health Team were very proactive and creative in resourcing funding for critical services. Alcohol misuse was one of those areas.

b) Commissioning Services for those with needs around homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence and substance misuse.

Councillor Branson queried whether the Executive Member had information with regard to the number of people presently in temporary accommodation in the Middlesbrough area, as a result of homelessness.

The Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs advised that he did not have the figures to hand but he would provide them to the member following the meeting.

Councillor Rathmell stated that he would like to commend the Executive Member on acknowledging that homelessness was not in isolation along with domestic abuse, sexual abuse and drug abuse. He stated that the Executive Member had referred to a Strategic Needs Assessment carried out in 2017/2018 and he pointed out, that looking at the substance abuse and homelessness data, it was evident that the officers dealing with these issues did not have any support to record valuable data. He queried with regard to whether any measures had been put in place to ensure that the data was recorded in the future.

The Executive Member advised that the Council was in the early stages of developing a new model in terms of troubled adults. The Council was creating an integrated/shared system so that the data was shared across services. The Executive Member was working with Culture and Communities and Public Health directorates to look at combined ways of monitoring and capturing data on homelessness. The Executive Member was also working with the Public Health Team to carry out a twenty week mapping exercise, right across the town, engaging with substance misuse and community support officers, to get an understanding of the issues that the town was currently facing.

Questions on the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health report.

Councillor Goodchild stated that she was pleased to hear about the Staying Put Agency being shortlisted for the Home Improvement Agency of the Year award. She queried whether the fees for services to residents would remain the same or was there any plans to put the fees up.

The Executive Member advised that she expected that the fees would remain the same but if there were any changes to this, she would advise the member.

Councillor Uddin advised that he would email the Executive Member his question relating to Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough.

Councillor Cooke referred to the Living Standards in Private Rented Sector part of the Executive Member's report and the concerns with regard to standards of housing, fire doors, alarms, emergency lighting and properties illegally turned into HMO's. He queried whether the Executive Member would be supporting the roll out of the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme in the Newport Ward.

The Executive Member advised that the scheme had worked for some time and that the Council did work with the scheme.

Questions on the Executive Member for Children's Services report.

Councillor Hellaoui indicated that she would email the Executive Member her question with regard to the SEND inspection.

Councillor Storey referred to the Executive Member's report in respect of progress against improvement plans. He queried with regard to whether there had been any delays, if any delays were expected and how the saving plans were progressing in light of the pressures on the Children's Services Department.

The Executive Member advised that a report on savings plans was due to be submitted to the Executive on 3 September 2019. If the member required any further information, if he emailed the Executive Member, he would respond in writing.

Councillor Uddin stated that one of the neighbouring authorities was concerned about children coming into care. He asked the Executive Member how many children, Middlesbrough Council currently had in care.

The Executive Member advised that he did not have that figure to hand but that he would provide a response in writing.

Questions on the Executive Member for Culture and Communities report.

Councillor Thompson queried with regard to where the funding was coming from to employ 40 Street Wardens and the 2 new enforcement vehicles. She queried whether the funding would have been better to have been used to fund PCSO's because they had more powers.

The Executive Member advised that the funding was covered by the budget but she would provide the member, with more detail, in writing.

The Mayor advised that funding for the Street Wardens was coming from TVCA as there was a pot of money that could be used to regenerate the town. With regard to the two enforcement vehicles, the cost amounted to around two hundred pounds. The Council already had the vehicles and they only required minor adaptations to turn them into enforcement vehicles. The vehicles were patrolling the streets, fitted with cameras, gathering data and images, which were then supplied to the police.

Councillor Hellaoui referred to the part of the Executive Member's report in relation to Involvement and Promotion.

Councillor Hellaoui stated that she was struck by the number of awards and achievements which were the legacy of the previous administration. She outlined many of the achievements including the National UK Recovery Walk, Live Well Centre, the Stop Smoking Award, the Journal Gazette Annual Cultural Awards and the Town Hall Awards. Councillor Hellaoui invited members to join her in thanking the people of the town who had contributed to the achievements.

The Chair reminded members of the public not to interrupt members when they were speaking.

The Mayor stated that he would like to thank the staff involved and he stated that it was important that the Council championed good work and praised success.

Councillor Rostron referred to the part of the Executive Member's report in relation to the Big Weekend. She advised that it had taken some time to build up the trust of the BBC and the previous Mayor, Dave Budd and the previous Executive Member for Culture and Communities had built that trust.

Councillor Rostron thanked and congratulated all of the staff involved in the Big Weekend which was a very resource intensive event.

The Executive Member joined Councillor Rostron in thanking the staff and she stated that the fact that Middlesbrough had hosted such a big event had changed how the town was now viewed nationally.

Questions on the Executive Member for Environment's Services report.

The Chair explained that the Executive Member for Environment had submitted his apologies but gave members the option of reading their question out or submitting it to the Executive Member in an email.

Councillor J Walker referred to the part of the Executive Member's report on Bulky Waste Collection. Councillor Walker stated that the trial of the Bulky Waste Collection was scheduled for June, July and August. She queried with regard to how it was planned, if there was a strategic plan put in place to deal with the increase in calls for the removal of Bulky Waste, when was it launched, was it publicised and how it was promoted. Councillor Walker advised that she was receiving complaints from residents that they were being given dates in September and October for the removal of Bulky Waste. Some residents complained that after being given a date for removal, the Council had not turned up, and their waste had being taken by youths and dumped elsewhere or burnt. She queried whether there would be any scrutiny on the issue to see if the trial had worked; whether fly-tipping had reduced as a result of the trial; whether the Council had achieved any savings; whether the findings of the outcome of the trial would be published and if it was intended to continue with the trial.

Councillor Hubbard advised that he would email the Executive Member his question regard to Bulky Waste Collection.

Councillor Hubbard congratulated Councillor Stephen Hill on his recent election and welcomed him to his first meeting of the Council.

The Mayor responded to the queries raised by Councillor Walker with regard to Bulky Waste collection. He stated that after discussions with officers regarding fly tipping and other waste problems, it was decided to introduce the 3 month Bulky Waste trial. Instances of fly-tipping did appear to have reduced as a result of the trial, however the queues for Bulky Waste collection did appear to have increased. In terms of costs, it could not be determined at this point if it had cost more. The Mayor advised that if the trial did not work it would not continue but the Council would continue to look at trialling new ideas to do good things with very little money.

Questions on the Executive Member for Finance and Governance report.

Councillor Arundale referred to the fact that the Revenues and Benefits Team had successfully retained the Customer Services Excellence Accreditation in January 2019. He referred to the comments from the assessor that 'Revenues and Benefits are delivering to a standard that others should aspire to' and congratulated and thanked the team.

The Executive Member stated that the team that worked in Revenues and Benefits were always looking at new ideas to help people. For the last twenty ones year the team had achieved the Customer Services Excellence Accreditation. The Executive Member wished to thank the team for all their hard work in continually coming up with new ideas of working and their continued success in achieving the accreditation.

6 REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Council received and noted a report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board outlining the work of the Board and Scrutiny Panels.

7 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

The Chair announced that there were three questions from Members of the Council. The details of the specific questions were included at Agenda Item 10.

Question 7/19 - Councillor Cooke to The Mayor - Meeting regarding the PSPO

The Mayor advised that if the residents contacted him to arrange a meeting, he would attend.

Question 8/19 - Councillor Cooke to The Mayor - Unveiling of plan for the brownfield site in Newport.

The Mayor advised that the Council was currently subject to a Non-Disclosure Agreement with the partner involved in the scheme. He did however expect to be able to make an announcement within the next 28 days.

Question 9/19 - Councillor Cooke to The Mayor - Safeguards for community groups wanting to litter pick

The Mayor advised that litter picks were being held right across the town but the Council did not usually organise them. The Council could send staff along to carry out risk assessments but if litter pickers were over the age of 18 then the Council would not usually have responsibility for safeguarding.

Councillor Cooke advised that knives and needles had been found on a brownfield site in Newport. He stated that training should be given on how to dispose of things found as a result of litter picking. The Mayor advised that it was something that the Council should consider.

8 NOTICE OF MOTION

There were no Motions submitted within the specified deadlines for Motions for this meeting.

9 NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)

There were no Urgent Motions submitted within the specified deadlines for Urgent Motions for this meeting.

10 LOCALISM ACT 2011 - REQUEST FOR GENERAL DISPENSATIONS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to enable a general dispensation to be granted to those members who had applied for a dispensation in respect of matters that may affect so many Councillors that the Council or Committee would be inquorate.

The dispensation would allow Members to participate fully in a meeting whenever the following matters were discussed:

- a) Housing; where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the Councillor's particular tenancy or lease;
- b) Housing Benefit; where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) receives Housing Benefit;
- c) Statutory sick pay; if a Councillor receives this or is entitled to receive it;
- d) An allowance, travelling expense, payment or indemnity for Councillors;
- e) Any ceremonial honour given to a Councillor; or
- f) Setting the Council Tax or precept.

It was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** as follows:

1. That a general dispensation be granted to those Members who had applied for a dispensation in respect of matters that may affect so many Councillors that the Council or Committee would be inquorate.

2. That the general dispensation apply for the maximum permitted period of 4 years from the date of the decision at this Council meeting (24 July 2019).

11 **REVIEWING THE MIDDLESBROUGH LOCAL PLAN**

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised that the revised Local Plan had been looked at and reviewed. The consultation process in relation to the 2018 Local Plan had also been reviewed and it was decided that further consultation was needed.

Members were advised that the Council did not intend to scrap the plan, they aimed to look at the areas within the Plan that that were positive and take them forward and amend the areas that hadn't been looked into far enough and review them and consult on any proposed changes. The Executive Member advised that the 2014 Local Plan would take the Council up to 2024. He referred to the proposed timescale for the new Local Plan and urged the Council to approve the revised scope for the programme of hot food takeaways provision in and around local schools.

The Executive Member advised that the Council had a Local Plan Working Group that would review the Local Plan. He invited the Labour Group to put forward a representative from their Group to ensure that there would be cross party representation on the Working Group, when reviewing the Local Plan.

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

That the Council approve the revised scope and programme for preparation of the Middlesbrough Local Plan, and adopts the Hot Food Takeaway Policy of the Publication Draft Local Plan (policy EG7) as an interim planning policy.

12 **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Members had been advised, prior to the meeting that the report on Members Allowances had been withdrawn and would be considered at a future meeting of the Council.