

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 23 December 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors R Arundale, A Bell, D J Branson, B Cooper, D P Coupe, D Davison, C Dodds, T Furness, L Garvey, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, A High, S Hill, C Hobson, J Hobson, B A Hubbard, N Hussain, D Jones, L Lewis, D McCabe, J Platt, E Polano, A Preston, G Purvis, J Rathmell, D Rooney, J Rostron, R M Sands, M Saunders, M L Smiles, M Storey, P Storey, J Thompson, J A Walker, S Walker, A Waters and C Wright

OFFICERS: M Allinson, S Bonner, J Bromiley, B Carr, G Cooper, N Finnegan, R Grey, A Humble, D Johnson, C Owens, T Parkinson, K Parkes, A Perriman, S Reynolds, H Watson, K Whitmore, I Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillor C Cooke, Councillor S Dean, Councillor J Goodchild, Councillor T Mawston, Councillor C McIntyre, Councillor J McTigue, Councillor M Nugent, Councillor Z Uddin, Councillor G Wilson, Councillor D Smith.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None Declared

1 MINUTES - COUNCIL MEETING - 9 OCTOBER 2019

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 October 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair announced with deep regret, the death of former Councillor, Maureen Whatley. Maureen was Councillor for the Kader Ward from 2007 - 2011 and was a Member of the Planning Committee, Older Persons Partnership and Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

All those present stood for a minutes silence to remember Maureen Whatley.

3 MAYORS STATEMENT AND REPORT

The Mayor provided Members with an overview of the items that the Council was focussing on in 2020.

- Focus on green issues - it was critical that the Council showed leadership on this issue;
- Make Middlesbrough Safer - in particular making streets safer. The Council had already taken steps to correct bad behaviour and in January these steps would take effect as a result of the PSPO;
- Focus on making the Council financially sound by balancing the budget - Council needed to grow income by facilitating more businesses to pay rates, more people paying Council tax but in the right areas.
- The Mayor referred to the fact that although it was Christmas time, some people were still lonely. He stated that there were lots of kind places in the town where people could eat and share some fun and he advised that he would list them on his Facebook page later.

Members made the following comments on the Mayor's statement:-

- Green issues were important and Members would like to see the streets safer as a result of the introduction of the PSPO, however some of the issues that had been happening in TS1 had been shifted to other Wards in the town;

- It was important to challenge the Government with regard to the Council's financial settlement. It was not acceptable that authorities based in the South of the country received better financial settlements than this authority. The financial settlements should be based on deprivation and need.

The Mayor stated that there was little point in complaining to the Government, as complaining had no effect in the past. The Council needed to look at how it could grow its income.

4 **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).

Questions/comments on the report of the Deputy Mayor and Thematic Lead for Drugs

a) Purdah

Councillor Storey referred to the recent elections and congratulated Andy McDonald and Simon Clark on their re-election. He referred to issues surrounding the Deputy Mayor and the election processes.

The Deputy Mayor congratulated Mr McDonald on his well-planned campaign and advised that all of his actions within the campaign fell within electoral guidelines.

Questions/comments on the report of the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

b) Local Government Chronicle

Councillor Thompson congratulated the Staying Put Agency on being shortlisted as a finalist for the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

The Executive Member advised that the awards celebrated excellence in local government and three members of the Staying Put Agency Team had been invited to go down to London to provide a presentation on the work of the team. The Executive Member congratulated the team on their achievements.

Questions/comments on the report of the Executive Member for Environment

c) Transporter Bridge

Councillor Arundale advised that he believed that the Transporter Bridge had been closed since July and he queried when it would reopen.

The Executive Member advised that the suspension wires on the bridge had been found to be stretched and needed to be replaced. The Council staff did not have the necessary training to carry out this task so the Council had been required to employ outside contractors to do the work. Defects had also been found in the welding. The Council was waiting for a report from the auditors but it was hoped that the bridge would reopen in the new year.

d) Environment

Councillor Thompson queried with regard to how many trees had been planted in the town and in which areas of the town that they had been planted.

The Executive Member advised that the Council had funding to plant 1200 trees. The first tree had been planted in Ayresome Gardens and the plan was to plant trees from the East to the West of the town. Plans were underway to plant 200 trees in Newfield Crescent.

The Mayor advised that it was critical that the Council did something to improve the environment. Staff had managed to secure 500,000 in funding for the purpose of planting trees. The Council's aim was to set national standards to be cleaner and greener.

Questions/comments on the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance

e) Unclaimed Benefit Campaign and Hub Service Programme

Councillor Branson congratulated the staff and the community hubs involved in the unclaimed benefits scheme and he queried whether the Coulby Newham Community Hub was involved in the scheme.

The Executive Member advised that the teams involved in advising on unclaimed benefits rotated around the community and she advised that Coulby Newham Hub could be considered for future campaigns. She advised that it was a fantastic scheme and it had helped many people to obtain benefits. The Executive Member stated that she wished to thank all of the different agencies and the Council staff involved in delivering the service.

Questions/comments on the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration

f) Northern School of Arts

Councillor Arundale advised that he looked forward to the opening of the new college. He stated that it was an excellent location and the proximity to the bus station meant that the Council should retain the bus station. He queried whether it would be delivered in 2021.

The Executive Member advised that the new college was on schedule to be open in 2021.

g) Transport and Infrastructure

Councillor Furness queried with regard to the use of superfast chargers and queried whether the Council could use less powerful chargers. He queried whether the chargers could be 7 watt or 50 watt. The Executive Member advised that the Council needed to provide charging points. He advised that he was a member of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transportation Committee and they were also providing the facility. He stated that the Council was working with the environment however they did need to provide the facility for people coming into town.

5 REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board submitted a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and each of the individual Scrutiny Panels. Reference was made to the fact that discussion on scrutiny had been restricted due to Purdah in relation to the recent Parliamentary election.

6 MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2020/21

The Elected Mayor and the Strategic Director of Finance, Governance and Support submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the following:-

That Council notes the Medium-Term Financial Plan position for 2020-23.
That Council notes the proposed budget savings for 2020/21 which it is proposed will form part of the Mayor's 2020/21 budget (Appendices 1-3). Savings detailed in Appendix 2 will go to public consultation, commencing on 24 December 2019 and ending on 31 January 2020.
That Council notes the proposed budget savings in Appendix 3 which will be further developed prior to being brought forward for approval during 2020/21 or in future years.

The Mayor advised that the Council needed to make approximately £14m of savings. Most had been found internally and it would not affect frontline services but there was still a

shortfall. The Council had to be solvent. There were a number of options available to the Council:

- the Council could make big service cuts and leave Council Tax unchanged
- the Council could increase Council Tax by the maximum of 4% and all services would remain the same
- The Council could do something in the middle and increase Council Tax by 2%

The Mayor stated that he was proposing a 2% increase in the Council Tax. The Mayor stated that he had not made his mind up yet about the cuts, he wanted to consult the public and members. He advised that the Council would be launching a big consultation exercise where everybody would be able to have an input. The Mayor stated that cuts to any services would not be popular but the aim was to do the best for Middlesbrough.

Councillor Storey advised that setting the budget was a very important task that had to be done every year. Some Councillors had a lot of experience in managing significant cuts due to the Government settlement figure. Councillor Storey stated that even if the Council tax was raised, cuts would still have to be made. He stated that there was a point in complaining to the Government when the jobs of lollipop ladies and people cleaning the buildings were at risk, or people whose jobs would be outsourced and working conditions could change. 50% of the Council's budget had been cut since 2010 and the Council would experience a further five years of cuts. He stated that the Council needed to protest at the Local Government settlement figure. Councillor Storey encouraged people to participate in the budget consultation.

The Mayor stated that the Council aimed to be in a much better financial position in the future.

Councillor Rooney stated that the report stated that consultation had taken place with the groups however that was on the basis of a 1.99 increase in the base rate therefore the information that Members had been presented with was not the same as was included in the report.

On the proposal not to increase the base rate but only to attach the 2% this was only in respect of Adult Social Care it was not for other services, it was only to be spent on Adult Social Care. Councillor Rooney stated that she would like the consultation documents to include the cumulative impact of not having the 1.99% increase in years 2 and 3 so Members could see what this would mean.

Councillor Rooney also requested that in respect of the extra funding - how much it was in terms of pounds and percentage of the budget being presented so Members could see what the impact would be if the funding was not given in years 2 and 3.

The Mayor confirmed that the Council was getting additional funding of £3m this year.

Councillor S Walker stated that the Mayor was an excellent communicator on social media. He advised that there was a misconception on how the Council worked and it was important to educate people as part of the consultation, so that they were aware that the Council Tax did not fund all of the Council's services. Councillor Walker stated that it was important to give people the full picture to say why cuts had to be made and the Mayor needed to champion the voices of the people.

Councillor Cooper congratulated Andy McDonald on his re-election and he requested Councillor Storey to ask the MP to request any funding that was available for Middlesbrough people. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reminded Members that any statements or questions should be in relation to the report in respect of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Councillor Hobson stated that it was important to realise that the Council was where it was and they were not going to receive any further funding from the government.

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

That Council notes the Medium-Term Financial Plan position for 2020-23.
That Council notes the proposed budget savings for 2020/21 which it is proposed will form part of the Mayor's 2020/21 budget (Appendices 1-3). Savings detailed in Appendix 2 will go to public consultation, commencing on 24 December 2019 and ending on 31 January 2020.
That Council notes the proposed budget savings in Appendix 3 which will be further developed prior to being brought forward for approval during 2020/21 or in future years.

7 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

The Chair announced that one question had been received from a Member of the Council. The details of the specific question was included at Agenda Item 10.

Question 10/19 - Councillor Branson to The Mayor - regarding improving public transport provision in the Middlesbrough area.

The Mayor advised that very few buses were seen and those that were seen were often empty and they were expensive. A range of consultations had taken place since the election in 2019 and ideas that were formed before the election such as super stops were going ahead. The bus station was old and there was a plan to improve it. The Council was working with the Combined Authority to improve public transport and he invited the Member to contact him with regard to any ideas he may have.

Councillor Branson advised that some form of bus franchising would be a good idea and he requested that the Mayor raise the issue with the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor. The Mayor agreed to do this in principle but advised the Member to contact him to discuss it.

8 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

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

9 NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)

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

10 INTERIM TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE/COUNCIL COMMITTEES - OUTSIDE BODIES - ALLOCATION OF PLACES AND MEMBERSHIPS 2019

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to seek Members' approval for interim changes to the Chief Officer Appointments Committee Terms of Reference and to agree appointments, arising from vacancies and resignations from Committees and Outside Bodies.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that there was currently no process for dealing with joint authority appointments at director level and above. It was therefore proposed that the Chief Officer Appointments Committee be delegated the powers to undertake this role and that a Panel be selected from this Committee to sit on an interview panel with other authorities. Whilst there was an imminent appointment for the Director of Public Health on the horizon, the proposed process would be used for any other such appointments that may arise during the review. The terms of reference for the Panel were as set out in the report.

It is proposed that the changes made to the terms of reference be undertaken on an interim basis until such a time as the review of the Committee structures previously requested by Council had been considered by the Constitution and Members Development Committee and then agreed by Full Council.

It was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** that the Interim Terms of Reference in respect of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee be approved.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer requested Council to agree appointments, arising from vacancies and resignations from the following Committees and Outside Bodies.

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

That Council approve the appointments to the following places, allocated in accordance with the wishes of the political groups and other Councillors, as nominated at the meeting, for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year, or until amended by Council, (whichever was the latter):-

Corporate Parenting Board

2 vacancies - 1 MICA and 1 open to all Councillors
No MICA Nominations
Councillor Nugent and J Walker appointed

South Tees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

1 vacancy -1 MICA (No Executive Members)
No MICA nominations
Councillor Coupe appointed

Teesside Pension Fund Committee

1 vacancy - open to all Members
Councillor Bell appointed

Tennis World

1 vacancy - open to all Members
Councillor Davison appointed

Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited

1 vacancy for substitute - open to all Members
Councillor Cooper appointed

Durham Darlington Teesside Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Committee

1 vacancy - open to all Members (No Executive Members) No Nominations received.

11 **COUNCIL - CHANGE OF DATE AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request that Members note a change of date for one of the March Council meetings and to advise of the date for an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.

Moved, seconded and **ORDERED** that Council note the following:

(i) The change of date for 4 March 2020 Council meeting to 6 March 2020 at 7.00pm.

(ii) The arrangements for an Extraordinary Council Meeting to consider the budget on 26 February 2020 at 7.00pm.

12 **SECTION 85, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS - COUNCILLOR SMITH**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to consider a request from Councillor Smith for an exemption from attendance at Council meetings as required by Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Smith had formally requested the authority to grant the request for an exemption with regard to attendance at Council meetings until the date of his trial.

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a Member will cease to be member of the authority if:

- (i) they fail to attend any meetings of the authority or any other meeting as a representative of the council;
- (ii) they have been absent for a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance;
- (iii) their absence is not due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period.

Approval by the authority to grant the request with regard to attendance at Council meetings must be before the expiry of the six month period.

Following a vote of all of the Members of the Council present at the meeting,

It was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** that the request from Councillor Smith for an exemption from attendance at Council meetings be refused.