

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough on 15 January 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors L Garvey (Vice-Chair) (In the Chair) A Bell, C Cooke, B Cooper, D P Coupe, D Davison, S Dean, C Dodds, T Furness, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, A High, S Hill, B A Hubbard, N Hussain, L Lewis, T Mawston, D McCabe, J McTigue, M Nugent, 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, G Wilson and C Wright

OFFICERS: M Allinson, C Benjamin, J Bromiley, B Carr, G Field, R Horniman, A Pain, T Parkinson, A Perriman, S Reynolds, E Scollay

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillor R Arundale, Councillor D J Branson, Councillor J Goodchild, Councillor C Hobson, Councillor J Hobson, Councillor D Jones, Councillor C McIntyre, Councillor Z Uddin, Councillor A Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

1 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 23 DECEMBER 2019

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 December 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair advised that this was a business meeting of the Council and whilst members of the public were welcome to attend, and listen to the debate, they were not allowed to call out or disrupt the meeting.

He advised that if any member of the public interrupted the meeting, they would be issued with a warning. If they proceeded to interrupt the meeting they would be asked to leave the meeting.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chair invited the member of the public who had submitted Question 8/19 to put his question to the Mayor.

The Mayor thanked Mr Robson for the question.

He advised that the Council had passed a motion asking for an update on the Council's involvement in the Independent Inquiry on Child Sex Abuse at its meeting in August. The Executive Member for Finance and Governance had provided that update as part of her Executive Member's report at the last council meeting on 23 December. He advised that a copy of the update could be found in the Executive Member report on the website or he advised that he was happy to arrange for it to be provided.

The Mayor repeated again, on behalf of Middlesbrough Council, great sympathy for those who had suffered any abuse, whether physical, sexual or mental. Any such abuse was abhorrent.

He stated that the Council would continue to follow the progress of the Inquiry and to manage the civil claims of victim/survivors who came forward seeking compensation, in a prompt and sensitive way.

MAYORS STATEMENT AND REPORT

The Mayor stated that there were no Executive Member reports for this meeting. He advised that the last Council meeting was 23 December 2019 and the reports for this meeting would have had to go out 2 weeks after that. Given that there was only a 2 week gap between the December meeting and the papers going out for this meeting, and the fact that it was the Christmas period, he had decided that, given the timescales involved, to defer the reports to the March meeting.

The Mayor advised that he wished to raise a number of issues:

a) The Budget

The Mayor advised that the budget posed many challenges and as a result of public consultation, 700 pieces of feedback had been provided, and the consultation period was only half way through. He stated that the consultation for the budget for the previous year, had only resulted in 17 people providing feedback. He stated that he intended to listen to the feedback received as a result of the consultation process, but the Council faced a tough situation.

The Mayor stated that he did not want to make significant changes to peoples jobs/careers or public services but all of this would need to be taken into consideration when setting the budget. He stated that once the consultation period had closed, he would present his formal proposals.

b) Crime and Security

The Mayor advised that tackling crime was a priority and the wardens were tracking down known dealers, by obtaining information and exposing dealers. He stated that he wanted the dealers locking up, or if they couldn't be prosecuted, they should go and live elsewhere. He stated that the Council would continue to track them down.

He advised that North Ormesby as a community, was changing. In the previous six months crime had reduced and the place was much cleaner and feedback from residents was more positive. The difference appeared to be the intolerance of bad behaviour. He stated that the Ward Councillor was speaking to the people in the Ward, picking up litter and warning people about bad behaviour. The Mayor commented on the previous Ward Councillor for North Ormesby.

c) Pot-Holes

The Mayor advised that he had tasked the Deputy Mayor and the Executive Member for Environment with devising a Pot-Hole Strategy which would allow people to know when a pot-hole was scheduled to be repaired. The strategy was expected to be announced in the next two weeks.

d) Visits to schools

The Mayor announced that he would be visiting every school in the borough and talking to staff and pupils to inspire them with regard to how to do better in exams and to inspire them to have better careers.

e) Green issues

The Mayor advised that he intended to introduce a new policy to reduce plastic use in the town and there would be an announcement with regard to the new policy coming soon.

f) Social Media

The Mayor advised that he had been challenged on social media with regard to comments he had made regarding decent people. The Mayor defined what he meant by a decent person. He stated that people who brought the area down, or polluted the area were not decent

people and he urged them to accept any help on offer.

Councillor Dean advised that she often took part in litter picking and often carried out street walkabouts. The Mayor stated that Councillor Dean sounded like a very good Councillor.

Councillor Storey stated that he appreciated the fact that many people had provided responses to the budget consultation. He advised that there had been significant consultation every time a budget was set by the previous administration and it was good to hear from people who had concerns with regard to the content of the budget.

In terms of North Ormesby Ward, Councillor Storey advised that the area had improved as a result of Selective Landlord Licensing. The scheme had improved housing and reduced crime and he stated that he would like the scheme to be rolled out across the town.

Councillor Storey stated that he was disappointed to hear personal attacks on a former Councillor, as the former Councillor had worked hard for the Ward and he urged the Mayor to apologise.

Councillor Storey stated that he was interested to hear about the Pot-Hole Strategy and he stated that it was right that the Mayor should visit schools as there were issues in some of the schools. He stated that the Mayor should avoid putting people into boxes and classing them as good or bad as some of the people had deep rooted problems.

The Mayor stated that he did not need to apologise as the Council needed to see Councillors on the streets. He stated that the current Councillor for North Ormesby Ward was an excellent Councillor. He advised that Selective Landlord Licensing was not a success in North Ormesby and the improvements brought about in the Ward were due to closing down houses where people were selling drugs.

Councillor Hellaoui urged the Mayor to refrain from using inciting and inflammatory language. She stated that there were criminals in the town but services were available to deal with them. Councillor Hellaoui stated that consulting people was good but the Mayor needed to act on the feedback received as part of the consultation process.

The Mayor stated that this was the first time that a proper consultation exercise in respect of the budget had been carried out. The Mayor advised that calling people decent or not decent did not represent inflammatory language.

Councillor Cooke stated that the police had cited that there had been a 30% reduction in crime in Newport, and the police had attributed it to Selective Landlord Licensing.

The Mayor stated that the Selective Landlord Licensing scheme had been introduced in North Ormesby some time ago but it had been introduced in a different way to the scheme in Newport and he advised that the improvements in the North Ormesby Ward were not as a result of the Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme.

Councillor Higgins urged the Mayor to work with all groups. She stated that Councillors regularly carried out litter picking and regularly talked to the community. Councillor Higgins stated that the Mayor needed to look forward to the future rather than looking back to the past. The Mayor stated that he regularly championed the work that Councillors from all sides carried out.

Councillor J Walker advised that the reason why the consultation process was working so well was because Councillors were encouraging the public to contribute to the consultation process. She commented on the fact that Councillors had been taken off the governing bodies of academies, The Mayor stated that he would encourage academies to include Councillors on governing bodies and he stated that it was great if any Councillor or other person was encouraging people to become involved in the consultation process. He stated that he was pleased that the Deputy Mayor was involved in developing the Pot-hole Strategy as he had done a great job in reshaping services in Adult Social Care and Public Health.

5 CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2020/2021

The Strategic Director of Finance Governance & Support and the Executive Member for Finance & Governance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to approve the Calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2020/2021.

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

That the Council notes the contents of the report.

That the Council approves the Council Tax base for 2020/2021 as 34,319.

That the Council approves 2,145 and 869 as the Council Tax bases for the parishes of Nunthorpe and Stainton & Thornton respectively for 2020/2021.

That the Council agrees to notify the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Cleveland Fire Authority and the Parish Councils of the 2020/2021 Council Tax base.

6 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020/2021

The Strategic Director of Finance Governance & Support and the Executive Member for Finance & Governance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to approve the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2020/2021.

It was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** that the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2020/2021 be approved.

7 PRIORITIES OF THE ELECTED MAYOR OF MIDDLESBROUGH AND STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Council received a report which set out the Priorities of the Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough and the proposed revised Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2023, setting out how the Council would contribute to the delivery of the Mayor's priorities.

The following comments were received by members in respect of the priorities:

- It was an important document that informed and set the Council's direction and it was a tool to help improve performance.
- Areas of the document could be strengthened in terms of partnership working such as the Council's work with Thirteen, Middlesbrough College and the University.
- Detailed targets needed to be expanded upon.
- In terms of the proposed new jobs, there were no measures included and there was not enough detail in terms of how many new businesses would be created.
- How would improvements in health be measured, looking at whether health and obesity was fitting into planning regulations.
- 12% of the town was made up of the BAME community and the report appeared to be light on equality and diversity.
- It was commented that it would be useful to see how the different cultures could contribute to the vision.
- It was commented that the outskirts of the town needed to be recognised as there were many attractions based on the outskirts of the town. There had been plans some years ago to have Middlesbrough recognised as a Sub Regional Centre and these should be pursued.
- A member commented on Page 10 of the strategy in relation to People. He stated that in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour head on - the sentence 'trouble causers who refused to conform would be kicked out of their homes and moved on'. He stated that it was not just a question about moving people on. He stated that the neighbouring authorities did this and they appeared to end up in his Ward. He stated that counter-shared houses caused issues. He stated that there should be a limit on these houses and sometimes those in recovery were housed with people with drug issues.
- A member commented that the print in the document was quite small and if the size of

the photos was reduced, the print could be made larger.

- In terms of the section on Housing and Infrastructure, there was no mention of buses, walking and cycling. There was also mention of the direct link to London in 2020 and he queried whether this was still possible.

The Mayor stated that there had been some constructive comments received and the comment made about the small print of the document was a good point. The strategy document was intended to provide people with an overview and it was important to produce a document that people would understand. He stated that he did not intend to include all of the points raised in the document submitted to Council. The aim was to have two documents, one that would be more in depth which would include back up documents and a concise document which would be easy to read.

It was Moved, Seconded and **ORDERED** that the Priorities of the Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough and the proposed revised Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2023, setting out how the Council will contribute to the delivery of the Mayor's priorities be approved.

8 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

The details of the specific questions were included at Agenda Item 11.

In response to Question 11/19, the Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the outcomes of the examination results from August 2019 were expected to be received on 23 January 2020. An update would be available in February.

The member requested to ask a supplementary question and he stated that under the previous administration, updates were given. He queried whether there was any improvements with results across the town. The Executive Member advised that he had not received the results so was unable to provide the information requested.

In response to Question 12/19, the Executive Member for Children's Services advised that a new free school, Outwood Riverside, which would provide 150 places for Year 7 pupils, was due to open in September 2020. The Council would have greater clarity in February 2020 when school data would be exchanged but the Executive Member advised that he could be reasonably confident that there would be enough places, although he could not be certain.

In response to Question 13/19, the Executive Member advised that MAP was previously funded through the Social Improvement Strategy, however this funding was withdrawn in September 2019 as part of wider savings. The aim of the funding was to establish mechanisms for supporting collaborative working that would be self-sustained by schools beyond the life of the strategy.

The member posed a supplementary question. He stated that school leavers across the town would be concerned regarding the decline of the Council's education service. Redcar and Cleveland were hiring a Deputy Head of Service for Education and Stockton were hiring a Head of Service, Middlesbrough were not hiring a specialist in Education to lead the service. He queried whether the Council had given up on the town's schools?

The Executive Member advised that the mechanism for reducing the funding came about before he was in position.

The member stated that Redcar and Stockton were hiring specialists in Education but Middlesbrough was not hiring a specialist Head of Service in education.

In response to Question 14/19, The Executive Member stated that the old Town Hall was an important part of the town's heritage. It was a Grade 2 listed building which was built in the 1800s. It was currently derelict and was a focal point for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping. The building had been empty since 1996 but it would cost in the region of £1m just to make it safe. The building was situated in an area that was due to be re-developed and the Council would work with the developer to help bring the building back to its former glory.

Community organisations could get funding that the Council could not access and there was also the option of crowd funding. The Executive Member stated that she would be interested in receiving any innovative ideas.

9 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 142, moved by Councillor Rostron and seconded by Councillor Furness of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

Fairtrade Motion

'Middlesbrough achieved Fairtrade Town Status in 2007. 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 meeting, at events and in public Council venues. Furthermore, the Council will continue to promote and participate in the town's programmes of Fairtrade events and activities.

Middlesbrough Council also recognises the role Fairtrade plays in assisting producers in developing countries to address the impacts of climate change, for example through tree planting and water conservation schemes'.

Councillor Rostron and Councillor Furness spoke to the motion.

An amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor High and seconded by the Mayor, A Preston, as follows:

Councillor High proposed that the issue of using Fairtrade products be referred to the Chief Finance Officer for consideration with regard to the financial implications surrounding agreement to the motion, prior to the motion being considered.

Councillor High and the Mayor spoke to the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Storey spoke in opposition to the amendment to the motion.

The amendment was put to the vote.

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

The substantive motion was then put to the meeting.

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

10 **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.