

THE EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on 21 January 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in Mandela Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough.

PRESENT: Mayor A Preston (Chair) and Councillors B Cooper, D Davison, A High, C Hobson, M L Smiles and A Waters

INVITEES: Councillors J McTigue and J Thompson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors T Higgins, J Hobson, L Lewis and M Nugent

OFFICIALS: C Benjamin, J Bromiley, K Parkes, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, E Scollay and H Watson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor D McCabe

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

19/63 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 20 DECEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the Executive meeting, held on 20 December 2019, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

19/64 **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF ACKLAM MEADOW, NEWFIELD CRESCENT AS A VILLAGE GREEN**

The Mayor and the Executive Director for Growth and Place submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. In recognition of the importance of the open space to the local community, the purpose of the report was to request the Executive's approval to submit an application seeking the voluntary registration of land at Acklam Meadow, Newfield Crescent, as a Village Green.

The decision to change the status of Council owned land to that of a Village Green, and to submit an application seeking the same, was not an officer decision and was not covered by the scheme of delegation. As a consequence, it required an Executive decision.

Section 15(8) of the Commons Act 2006 made provision for landowners to voluntarily seek to have their land registered as Village Green if they so wished. The process for doing so involved submitting to the registration authority the required application form, with accompanying site plan and a statutory declaration that the applicant was the landowner. The required application form and accompanying documentation was attached to the submitted report, at Appendix 1. The submitted report stipulated that an application for voluntary designation could not be rejected by the registration authority. The Council was the registration authority and any application for designation needed to be considered by the Licensing Committee.

Once registered as a Village Green, the land would be protected from development or change and residents of the locality would have the right to use the land for lawful sports and pastimes.

OPTIONS

Two alternative options were considered:

1. **to retain current designation and status of the land without Village Green registration. Whilst the land was held by the Council as open space, and maintained as such, that did not afford the land any long-term protection; and,**
2. **that the land was designated as Local Greenspace in the forthcoming Local**

Plan review. Whilst that offered more protection than the current status of the land, the designation could have been removed via a subsequent review of the Local Plan.

ORDERED

That the application seeking the voluntary registration of land at Acklam Meadow, Newfield Crescent, as a Village Green, be submitted.

REASONS

The land at Newfield Crescent was a valued open space resource that benefitted the local community. Village Green status recognised its importance and role in the local community and represented the most appropriate course to seek to protect it in perpetuity.

19/65

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING STRATEGY 2020-25

The Executive Member for Children's Services and the Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to seek the approval of the School Place Planning Strategy 2020-25.

The last place planning strategy, approved in 2013, set priorities against a trend of higher birth rates that had led to increased demand for primary school places. Births peaked at 2,095 in 2010/11 and had since fallen to 1,887 in 2017/18. There was a need for the Council to continue to monitor and plan primary school places against a recent trend of net inward migration and in response to housing development.

Demand for secondary school places had been increasing for a number of years as larger cohorts of pupils joined from primary schools. Combined with a recent increase in the popularity of Middlesbrough's secondary schools, and inward migration into the town's primary schools, demand for Year 7 places was projected to increase beyond the number of places on offer. Demand for Year 7 places was expected to peak in 2022/23, approximately 650 higher than at its lowest point in 2014/15.

While birth rates had been falling for a number of years, the school age population continued to grow. That growth continued to create additional demand for specialist services including special schools and alternative education providers.

On that basis, the Place Planning Strategy (attached at Appendix 2 of the submitted report) set out the Council's approach to the management of school places over the period 2020-2025. It covered all publicly funded schools including community, foundation and academies. It aimed to set a framework against which the Council and its partners could plan to meet future demand and changes in the demographics of the town.

OPTIONS

The Executive could have chosen not approve the strategy. Whilst that would not have prevented the necessary school place planning work from taking place, it would have made it more difficult for partners to understand the Council's priorities and approach.

With little direct control over the availability or distribution of school places, without an overarching strategic document the Council would have been at greater risk of having insufficient control to make the required changes. Schools and other partners could have made decisions about school places without enough understanding of the town's priorities.

Without a strategy it would have been more difficult for schools and trusts to understand their critical role in reshaping education provision to meet future demand. That could have increased the risk of the Council being unable to find schools and trusts to work and ultimately result in the Council failing to deliver its statutory

sufficiency duty.

ORDERED

1. **That the pressure on school places, particularly in secondary schools as larger cohorts of pupils move through from primary, be noted.**
2. **That the Place Planning Strategy, recognising the importance of working in partnership with schools, school trusts and other partners in the light of increasing levels of autonomy, be approved.**

REASONS

Middlesbrough Council had a statutory obligation to ensure that there were sufficient school places to meet demand. The Place Planning Strategy planned to ensure that the Council complied with that duty.

The strategy was required to guide the development of school provision as the school-age population changed. The strategy provided a framework against which the work of the Council and decisions by individual schools and trusts could take place.

The proposal planned to contribute to the social regeneration of Middlesbrough: providing more local school places, ensuring that young people could get the right education, learning experiences and qualifications they needed to achieve their potential.

The subject of the report had not been examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Board or by a Scrutiny Panel.

19/66

'NO WRONG DOOR' TRAILBLAZER IMPLEMENTATION

The Executive Member for Children's Services and the Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the development and implementation of the No Wrong Door (NWD) Trailblazer and highlight the timescale towards full implementation.

In May 2015, North Yorkshire County Council launched the innovative NWD model. In 2017, the Department of Education published an evaluation of the NWD innovation programme. The evaluation concluded that the impact of the NWD model outlined significant progress towards meeting the intended outcomes for improving the lives of young people, including:

- reduction in children looked after and in residential beds;
- unmet needs uncovered, e.g. learning difficulties;
- shift in police attitudes and changes to bail conditions;
- occupancy level in Hub beds average 44%;
- 86% of adolescents engaged with Hub able to remain at home;
- placement breakdowns falling;
- dramatic fall in young people missing from care or in contact with police;
- only one new out-of-authority placement since pilot began.

In July 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) Strengthening Families Programme Board agreed that Middlesbrough Council would be a NWD Trailblazer and agreed to fund the costed proposal submitted by Middlesbrough, which provided £2.7m funding over a three year time period.

Middlesbrough Children's Services was now working closely with North Yorkshire County Council to implement the project at pace.

The adoption of the NWD approach, developing the organisation's understanding of the model and the development and implementation of the NWD distinguishers planned to help Middlesbrough in the significant children's social care challenges that it faced.

Essentially, in adopting the NWD approach, the Council planned to:

- have a NWD residential / edge of care Hub in Middlesbrough;
- collaboratively manage a bespoke and phased implementation plan;
- develop a shared vision, language and practice framework;
- be supported to set up our Hub by NYCC's central delivery team;
- benefit from building an integrated team with embedded specialist roles;
- manage risk more appropriately;
- safely reduce LAC and reduce expensive out of area placements;
- keep our young people more safely in their families and communities;
- develop our own Restorative Practice Training Academy; and,
- improve outcomes for children and young people.

The high-level desired outcomes were to support a reduction in external residential placements and an increase in internal foster care placements; that in turn planned to ensure a reduction in the current spend on external residential placements.

OPTIONS

Whilst other options for implementation had been considered, for example, a TUPE scaling model, those had not been progressed as that was not felt to be in the best interests for the service.

ORDERED

That the development of the 'No Wrong Door' Trailblazer Project implementation be approved and supported in order to deliver:

- **Reduction in numbers of admissions to care for 12-17 year olds.**
- **Reduction in number of young people aged 12-17 year olds in expensive external placements.**
- **Reduction in episodes of 'missing' and number of young people receiving a service from NWD becoming missing.**
- **Reduction in annual forecasted overall LAC placement costs.**
- **Increase in percentage of children reunified with families from LAC placement.**

REASONS

Children and families who were in need help and protection would benefit by implementing the report's recommendations. The lives of vulnerable children would be improved by the delivery of robust and integrated safeguarding services. It was perceived that significant benefits would be achieved through the implementation of the NWD model in Middlesbrough.

There would also be significant benefits to partners including:

Police

- **Reduced calls for service: arrests / Anti-Social Behaviour;**
- **Better intelligence sharing and response to risk: RAISE;**
- **Change in culture**
- **Change in our young people's view of police;**
- **Reduced criminalisation of our young people.**

Health

- **Improved mental health of our young people: lower Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores;**
- **Reduced attendance at A&E and hospital admissions;**
- **Reduced pressure on CAMHS: embedded Life Coach;**
- **Increased identification of Specific Learning and Communication Needs (SLCN);**
- **Increased identification of autism;**

- **Specialist roles working together: Life Coach and Communication Support Worker.**

Education

- **Reduction in the number of you people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);**
- **Reduction in fixed term exclusions;**
- **Reduction in permanent exclusions;**
- **NWD pupils more likely to have both an SEN & SLCN.**

Housing

- **Improved placement stability;**
- **Decreased evictions;**
- **More young people in the housing pathway;**
- **NWD range of housing options.**

A considerable amount of stakeholder engagement had been undertaken to date. Discussions had been held across the Children's Services directorate at Staff Briefing meetings, the Project Lead (supported by NYCC colleagues) had attended appropriate team meetings to ensure understanding.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 7 October 2019 received a presentation update on the NWD Trailblazer implementation, as did the Corporate Parenting Board in September 2019.

19/67

VOICE OF THE CHILD AND MIDDLESBROUGH YOUTH COUNCIL

The Executive Member for Children's Services and the Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report for the Executive's consideration.

It was essential for the delivery of high-quality services that children and young people who were residents and service users were fully involved in the design and scrutiny of the Council's activities.

In the spirit of the Voice of the Child, the Council was seeking to engage children and young people as fully as possible in all of its services through initiatives such as the Children in Care Council and young person's representation with regard to recruitment.

Specifically, having a Youth Council provided a medium for communicating young people's views and a forum for community engagement where young people could ensure that their voices were heard.

The report was intended to update members on participation work across Middlesbrough and the development of Middlesbrough Youth Council.

The Voice of the Child Manager for Children's Services was working with the Empower Programme Manager to develop and deliver an action plan to launch Middlesbrough Youth Council by January 2020. Key updates on progress were outlined in the submitted report in respect of staffing, marketing, recruitment and the British Youth Council.

The Mind of My Own app (MOMO) was an app that was launched in Children's Services in March 2018. It supported an alternative means to gain the voice of the child and support their participation in developing their plans and the services they received. The Mind of My Own working group met monthly to drive progress. Key updates on progress were outlined in the submitted report in respect of participation, marketing, support and training.

The submitted report also provided information and updates on the Brightspots Survey for Looked After Children, the Inclusion working group, young commissioners and voice and influence champions.

ORDERED

That the content of the report be noted.

19/68

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, the Executive Member for Culture and Communities and the Strategic Director for Finance, Governance and Support submitted a report for the Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to propose and seek approval of the proposed Community Grants Programme. The Community Action Fund delivered under the Empower Programme was previously limited to a geographical area and had been reviewed by the Mayor.

Following the review a new centralised Community Grants Programme was proposed to replace the Community Action Fund and combine it with the Community Chest Grant. That planned to produce a total of £160k available for funding within the new Community Grant Programme.

The proposed Community Grants Programme planned to cover all wards across the town. The funds available would be:

- Community Chest Grant £33,000
- Community Action Fund £127,000 (proposed to be renamed 'Community Grant')

The combined Community Grants Programme fund of £160,000 was aimed at supporting the objectives of the Empower Programme (Middlesbrough Council's Social Regeneration Strategy aimed at improving the lives of the residents of the town).

The fund planned to bring together the objectives of the previous Community Action Fund and the Community Chest. It aimed to empower residents to identify issues and source solutions; build capacity to apply to other funders bringing more money into the town; enable the development of new community groups especially linked to the work of Council projects; and support the Council towards meeting its social regeneration objectives. Applicants were required to be Middlesbrough residents or small resident/community groups.

Further information on the objectives of the Community Grants Programme, and the process and criteria for awarding funding, were detailed in the submitted report.

OPTIONS

Alternative delivery options were considered, however the Council was best placed to drive that programme forward as applications submitted may not have always required the award of cashable sums. Previous learning had shown that some community ideas had led to improved partnership working between Council departments and teams and community members which had delivered the required results without the need to award grant sums, thus ensuring that the overall grant allocation could go further throughout the course of the year. Therefore, it was more beneficial for the Local Authority to facilitate that process and identify those opportunities directly.

ORDERED

1. **That a new Community Grants Programme with an annual value of £160k, to replace the existing Community Action Fund (£127k) (propose to be renamed to 'Community Grant') and combine it with the Community Chest fund (£33k), be approved.**
2. **That a formal process, for the award of funding from the Community Grant Programme, be approved.**

REASONS

The Community Action Fund, under Empower, attracted significant interest from the public with 79 applications for funding being received prior to the pause being implemented. The revised process planned to ensure that any applications were screened to check they were not viable for alternative funding streams, and those which were eligible for the Community Grants Programme would follow the designated approval mechanisms.

The relaunch of the programme aligned with the Council's commitment to social regeneration, facilitating opportunities for communities to bring forward innovative solutions for development in their local communities.

19/69

ESTATES STRATEGY - ASSET ACQUISITION POLICY

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Strategic Director for Finance, Governance and Support submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to clarify the options open to the Council when choosing to acquire assets, and to provide a framework for decisions to be considered in the light of the responsibility to support communities and stimulate economic activity in Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough Council held a significant asset portfolio that was used to deliver services, support businesses and contribute to the well-being of the Town.

The acquisition and disposal of assets was essential to enable the Council to update its asset portfolio to meet the changing needs of Middlesbrough.

The Estates Strategy had been put in place to set out how the Council planned to manage its property portfolio. It grouped the Council's property assets under five categories, to ensure that they were being effectively managed (properties could move across those groups and may be applicable to more than one group because of the nature of the asset). The five categories were:

- To generate revenue streams
- To generate capital receipts
- To stimulate economic activity
- To support communities
- To deliver operational services

The submitted report set out the proposed arrangements for the asset acquisition process, and also the plans to embed the new way of working within the authority, so as to ensure that the process of acquisition was both clear and transparent.

Information on the legislative framework and process objectives was contained in the submitted report.

The Executive confirmed that any acquisition proposed above the budget cap that was set out in the Asset Acquisition Business Case had to be pre-approved by the Strategic Director of Finance, Governance & Support in their role as S151 Officer and the Director of Legal and Governance Services as Monitoring Officer prior to the acquisition taking place.

ORDERED

1. **That the Council's ability to acquire assets for the purposes of supporting communities, stimulating economic activity and generating income streams, be noted, and that it could balance factors when considering acquisitions.**
2. **That the Asset Acquisition Policy and process outlined in the report, together with the proposed scheme of delegation, be adopted and implemented.**

REASONS

- In order to create a decision-making framework from which the Council could effectively support both physical and social regeneration across Middlesbrough.
- To ensure that the Council had an asset acquisition process which was responsive, fit for purpose and allowed the Council to clearly demonstrate Value for Money in relation to the acquisition of assets.
- The policy proposal supported delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and was designed to correspond with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy.

19/70

ESTATES STRATEGY - ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Strategic Director for Finance, Governance and Support submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to clarify the options open to the Council when choosing to dispose of assets, and to update the existing decision framework in the light of the responsibility to support communities and stimulate economic activity in Middlesbrough.

This report set out the proposed arrangements for the asset disposal process, and also the plans to embed the new way of working within the authority, so as to ensure that the process of disposal was both clear and transparent.

The Asset Disposal Policy would apply where a business case for disposal of a property asset had been prepared by the responsible Service Team Officer and approved by the Head of Asset Management, based on due consideration of the Council's Estates Strategy aims.

Information on the legislative framework and process objectives was contained in the submitted report.

The Executive confirmed that any proposed sale that was less than the asset value for current use determined in the Disposal Business Case had to be approved by the Strategic Director of Finance, Governance and Support in their role as S151 officer and the Director of Legal and Governance Services as Monitoring Officer prior to any of the authorisations taking place.

ORDERED

1. That the Council's ability to dispose assets for the purposes of supporting communities, stimulating economic activity and generating income streams, be noted, and that it could balance those factors when considering disposals.
2. That the Asset Disposal Policy and process outlined in the report, together with the proposed scheme of delegation, be adopted and implemented

REASONS

- In order to create a decision making framework from which the Council could effectively support both physical and social regeneration across Middlesbrough.
- To ensure that the Council had an asset disposal process which was responsive, fit for purpose and allowed the Council to clearly demonstrate Value for Money in relation to the disposal of assets.
- The policy proposal supported delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and was designed to correspond with the Council's Asset Acquisition Policy.

19/71

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - VULNERABLE AND FRAGILE HEALTH SERVICES - SERVICE RESPONSE

The Health Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review of Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services. A copy of the full report was attached.

The scrutiny panel made eight recommendations upon which a response was sought from the relevant service area. The Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration submitted a service response to the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the Action Plan was attached.

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel presented the final report to the Executive. The Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health presented the service response.

ORDERED

1. **That the content of the Health Scrutiny Panel's Final Report, on Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services, be noted.**
2. **That the Action Plan, developed in response to the scrutiny panel's recommendations, be approved.**

REASON

It was a requirement that Executive formally considered the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirmed the Service Area's response to the Panel's accompanying plan.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.