

## THE EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on 16 June 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in Virtual Meeting.

**PRESENT:** Mayor A Preston and Councillors B Cooper, D Davison, A High, C Hobson, D McCabe, M L Smiles and A Waters

**PRESENT AS OBSERVERS:** Councillor A Hellaoui

**INVITEES:** Councillors M Saunders and J Thompson

**OFFICIALS:** C Benjamin, G Field, R Horniman, A Hoy, A Humble, C Lunn, G Moore, K Parkes, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, E Scollay, P Stephens and I Wright

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor C McIntyre

### DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item/Nature of Interest
Councillor Mieka Smiles	Non-Pecuniary	Item 10/ family member lives near Marton Country Club site.

20/1 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

20/2 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 17 MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the Executive meeting, held on 17 March 2020, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/3 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 20 MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the Executive meeting, held on 20 March 2020, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/4 **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

The Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Director for Adult Social Care and Health Integration submitted a report for the Executive's consideration.

The Director of Public Health (DPH) had a statutory requirement to produce an annual report on the health of their population. The 2019 DPH annual report, 'As Clean as it can be' was a joint report for South Tees (Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough). The report described the impact of air quality on health and highlighted the economic, health, wider wellbeing and care impact on the local population. It made recommendations for improving air quality in the South Tees area to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

There was currently a South Tees Clean Air Strategy and associated action plan being developed. It was planned that the recommendations from the 2019 DPH annual report would be incorporated into the strategy to help monitor progress towards achieving cleaner air for South Tees. In summary, the recommendations contained within the 2019 DPH annual report, included:

1. Establishing a South Tees Clean Air Partnership to develop and deliver the South Tees strategy.
2. Continuing to monitor air quality proactively to ensure that potential hotspots of poor air quality were detected early and that measures were put in place to make improvements.
3. Engaging with the public on air quality matters, providing information and awareness raising to empower them to change their behaviour and consider its impact on cleaner air.

4. Engaging with businesses to raise awareness of how they impact on clean air and how they and their employee's behaviour could maximise their contribution to cleaner air.
5. Continuing to lobby for national measures to improve air quality and access to funding at a local level to develop and implement initiative and projects, which would contribute to cleaner air.
6. Continuing to work with partners to achieve our ambition towards smoke free South Tees.

#### **ORDERED**

**That the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019, and the recommendations for implementation, be noted.**

20/5

#### **COVID19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Chief Executive submitted a report for the Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's response to date and the projected impact on local communities, the Council's strategic objectives and its financial position. The report sought approval of the Council's proposed COVID-19 Recovery Plan, which was attached at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, and the associated arrangements for reporting progress and engaging with the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council had a legal duty (alongside other local partners) to plan for and deliver both a response to an emergency incident and the recovery from it. The Coronavirus Act 2020 created a number of new, and revised other, local authority powers and duties (principally regarding education, social care, volunteering and death management) in order to better enable the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The submitted report stated that COVID-19 was an unprecedented global event that would have long-term impacts on life within Middlesbrough and significant implications for the Council's objectives, the way it did business and its finances both in the current and future years.

The Council's Scheme of Delegation gave the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance and financial management / monitoring, together with associated action.

The submitted report contained detailed information on:

- the SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 global pandemic;
- transmission in the UK and the UK Government response and recovery; and
- transmission in Middlesbrough and the Council's response and recovery.

#### **ORDERED**

1. **That the loss of life to COVID-19 in Middlesbrough be noted and condolences to the families and friends of all those that had died be formally recorded.**
2. **That the Council's effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic be noted and its thanks to all staff, volunteers, partners and other stakeholders for their efforts in reducing transmission and supporting local communities and businesses be recorded.**
3. **That the Council's proposed COVID-19 Recovery Plan (at Appendix 1) be approved and the associated arrangements for reporting progress and engaging with the Overview and Scrutiny Board.**

**REASONS**

**To allow the Council to meet its legal obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and to enable the effective management of finances, performance and risk in line with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.**

20/6

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-23 - PROGRESS AT YEAR-END 2019/20**

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

The purpose of the report was to advise of the progress against the 2020-23 Strategic Plan and the Council's financial position and its strategic risks at Year-End 2019/20.

The Council's Scheme of Delegation gave the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance and financial management / monitoring, together with associated action. Standing Orders and Financial Procedures required the Executive's approval for major virements between revenue budgets, and in-year changes to the Council's capital Investment Strategy.

The submitted report provided the necessary information to enable the Executive to discharge its performance and financial management responsibilities, setting out:

- a first progress update against the 2020-23 Strategic Plan;
- final revenue and capital budget outturns at Year-End 2019/20;
- position statements in relation to the Council's borrowing and its reserves;
- an update on the Council's Strategic Risk Register; and
- actions that the Council had taken and plans to take to address the issues raised.

A revised Investment Strategy for the period to 2022/23 was attached at Appendix 1 for the Executive's consideration and approval.

**ORDERED**

1. **That the key performance issues relating to the Council's Strategic Plan 2020-23 arising in Quarter Four be noted.**
2. **That the potential impact of COVID-19 on the Council's strategic priorities set out in the Strategic Plan 2020-23 be noted and a revised draft of the Strategic Plan for 2021-24 in November 2020 be received, which would reflect findings and recommendations from recovery planning.**
3. **That the 2019/20 revenue budget final outturn of £118,517,000, representing a £6,591,000 (5.89%) overspend, driven in the main by pressures within Children's Services, be noted.**
4. **That the use of the Council's reserves to cover the Overspend be approved, noting that it reduced the Council's General Fund Reserve to the minimum level (£9.4m) recommended by the Section 151 Officer.**
5. **That the continuing pressures within Children's Services, together with other pressures now faced by the Council (in particular the response to and recovery from COVID-19) posed a significant risk to the Council's financial position, and a fundamental review of the Medium-Term Financial Plan by the Interim Section 151 Officer be approved, to be considered by the Executive in September 2020.**
6. **That the 2019/20 capital budget final outturn of £68,177,000 be noted, representing a £3,654,000 (5%) underspend, driven in the main by delays resulting from COVID-19, and the proposed revised Investment Strategy to 2022/23 at Appendix 1 be approved.**
7. **That in light of the above, the Council's updated strategic risk register, at Appendix 2, be noted.**

**REASONS**

**To enable the effective management of finances, performance and risk in line with the**

**Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, the Scheme of Delegation and agreed corporate financial regulations.**

20/7

**STOP THE KNOCK**

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

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the fulfilled commitments that would make Middlesbrough Council a UK leader of a completely revolutionised approach to Council Tax collections.

The new policy planned to see the use of bailiffs to collect unpaid bills brought to an end for those in receipt of Council Tax support and significantly reduced generally. The Money Advice Trust's innovative 'Stop the Knock' initiative aimed to help the most vulnerable.

The solution was designed as a 'helping hand' to support customers who were experiencing difficulties in meeting payment obligations and in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and/or may be considered vulnerable.

Following a number of business process changes, aligned to the commitments linked to 'Stop the Knock', the Council now had the opportunity to commit to, and sign up to, the Money Advice Trust's initiative.

The submitted report contained detailed information in respect of the actions that had been undertaken to support the initiative.

**OPTIONS**

**The Council did have the option of not signing up to the initiative, however the solution outlined in the submitted report was aligned to the strategic direction of the Council and clearly provided a far greater support programme for customers experiencing financial difficulties. It was a tried and tested solution that had added significant value/benefits to the residents of Middlesbrough.**

**ORDERED**

1. **That sign up to the Money Advice Trust's 'Stop the Knock' Initiative, and sign up to the Council Tax Protocol, be approved.**
2. **That the introduction of collectable debt vulnerability policy (Appendix A) be approved.**
3. **That the additional steps introduced under each commitment, and the links to other initiatives such as - routes to work and Middlesbrough Council's 50 Futures programme, be noted.**

**REASON**

**The policy planned to allow Middlesbrough Council's Revenue and Benefits team to completely revolutionise the approach to Council Tax collections and set new national standards in helping the most vulnerable in society to meet their obligations.**

**By signing up to the protocol, it formally acknowledged the Council's commitment to 'Stop the Knock' and supported the overarching approach to residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and also those residents who may be considered as vulnerable. It also meant that Middlesbrough would be one of the first Council's to have signed up to all the commitments for 'Stop the Knock'.**

20/8

**ADDRESS EYESORE BUILDINGS AND SITES**

The Executive Member for Regeneration and the Executive Director for Growth and Place submitted a report for the Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to gain Executive approval for proactive action to address eyesore sites and buildings including, where an approved business case recommends, acquisition by voluntary agreement and where voluntary agreement was unsuccessful by the use of compulsory purchase powers.

Middlesbrough Council had ambitious plans to improve the town for residents, businesses and visitors, including increasing positive perceptions of the town at a national level. However, many communities had to suffer the adverse consequences of having building and sites that were long-term disused / derelict and untidy.

Dealing with those eyesore land and property issues would help improve communities throughout Middlesbrough. The report highlighted that by addressing such problems it would make neighbourhoods places people enjoy living in and could feel pride in.

Unfortunately some areas were blighted by long-term vacant and empty sites and buildings that were poorly managed and often decaying and deteriorating. Eyesore sites could:

- have a negative impact on communities, such as - attracting crime and anti-social behaviour.
- attract further problems, such as - vermin and result in adjoining properties being difficult to sell.
- put off investment into an area and detract from the perception of neighbourhoods.

A number of sites had already been identified that detract significantly from local communities, those were listed at paragraph 11 of the submitted report. The Executive Member for Regeneration clarified that the Market Tavern site referred to at paragraph 11, was the Crown and Mitre site.

A discussion ensued and Members also made reference to the following sites, that required attention:

- the former care home facility on Farndale Road;
- Peniston Road; and
- the former Park End Pub.

## **OPTIONS**

**Maintaining the status quo was not recommended, as mentioned in the submitted report, several of the long-term vacant eyesore sites would have continued to take up valuable public service resources and have a negative impact on communities if action was not taken to bring the sites back in to use.**

## **ORDERED**

**That proactive action to address eyesore sites and buildings be approved, including, where an approved business case recommends, acquisition by voluntary agreement and where voluntary agreement was unsuccessful, by the use of compulsory purchase powers.**

## **REASONS**

**Acquisition of eyesore sites was recommended to provide a long-term solution to the most prominent and/or problematic sites in Middlesbrough. The course of action supported the Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023.**

20/9

## **LAND AT NATURE'S WORLD, SANDY FLATTS LANE, MIDDLESBROUGH**

The Executive Member for Regeneration and the Executive Director of Growth and Place submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to seek approval to consult residents on the future of land at Nature's World, Sandy Flatts Lane,

Middlesbrough.

The site was large, approximately 5.1 hectares. Some of the plots within the site had emerging proposals for their future use. Consultation was needed to determine the future of the land. Appendix 1 showed the sites 1, 2, 3 and 4. Some of the plots within the site had emerging proposals for their future use and those were outlined in the submitted report at paragraphs 8 to 11.

It was proposed that public consultation be undertaken to determine residents' views on the potential future use of the site. If approval was granted, a localised letter drop to properties nearby would be undertaken and the Council's website, social media and press releases would be utilised to engage with the wider public. If the consultation was undertaken during the current Covid-19 situation, additional time would need to be factored in to the consultation due to delays with postage of letters and receipt of replies.

### **OPTIONS**

**The other potential option, would have been to take no action. That would have meant that the site continued to operate on an informal arrangement with limited community access and maintenance. It would not have provided a long-term solution for the site.**

### **ORDERED**

**That residents be consulted on the options for the future use of land at Nature's World, Sandy Flatts Lane, Middlesbrough.**

### **REASONS**

**The Council was committed to openness and transparency and giving local communities a say in how services were developed and delivered.**

#### **20/10 CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL'S FINAL REPORT - FOODBANKS - SERVICE RESPONSE**

Due to the unavailability of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel, the item was deferred.

#### **20/11 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL'S FINAL REPORT - INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY - SERVICE RESPONSE**

The Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review of Infrastructure Delivery. A copy of the full report was attached.

The scrutiny panel made six recommendations upon which a response was sought from the relevant service area. The Executive Member for Regeneration and the Director of Regeneration submitted a service response to the recommendations of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the Action Plan was attached.

The Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel presented the final report to the Executive. The Executive Member for Regeneration presented the service response.

### **ORDERED**

- 1. That the content of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's Final Report, on Infrastructure Delivery, 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.**

20/12

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

The Executive Member for Culture and Communities commented that, with the Mayor's endorsement, Middlesbrough's cultural venues had signed up to an anti-racism campaign. The Executive Member for Culture and Communities advised the Executive that work would be undertaken to listen to, and learn from, communities to proactively tackle the issue of racism in Middlesbrough.

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.