

**COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 14 October 2020.

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

**OFFICERS:** B Carr, C Benjamin, S Reynolds, A Perriman, S Bonner, C Breheny, S Lightwing, C Lunn, S Butcher, G Field, T Parkinson, A Wilson, I Wright and K Whitmore

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors L Garvey, C Dodds, B Hubbard and D Rooney

20/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

20/20 **MINUTES- COUNCIL - 2 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 September 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/21 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no formal Announcements for this meeting.

20/22 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY).**

There were no valid questions submitted from members of the public for this meeting.

20/23 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

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

COVID 19

The Mayor stated that although COVID rates were high in the town at the moment, over the previous 7 days, the infection rates appeared to have stabilised. The Government were in conversations with the North East Councils regarding the requirement to proceed to Tier 3 of the lockdown arrangements. There was a risk that the Government would try and put Middlesbrough into Tier 3. He stated that the Council need to converse with the Government and if the Government provided evidence to support this course of action, then the Council would support it. The Mayor confirmed that there had been no contact with Middlesbrough so far from anyone from the Government.

The Mayor stated that his biggest concern was jobs. There was a financial and social cost to the loss of jobs. He stated that the Council and the Government needed to fight to keep jobs.

Boho X

The Mayor commented on Boho X.

Homes

The Mayor advised that the Thirteen group had announced that they were planning to build 295 homes in Grove Hill. The Mayor also referred to planning permission for 145 high quality homes in Gresham that had recently been approved. He stated that there would be further building on brownfield land.

#### Crime

The Mayor announced that crime was steadily falling. The Police were getting support from Middlesbrough Council and were doing a better job but more needed to be done. The drug dealers were being challenged but he urged residents to report street dealing.

#### Children's Services

The Mayor announced that after 10 years of decline and receiving bad Ofsted reports, Children's Services was improving and he thanked the Deputy Mayor and the Executive Director of Children's Services for their hard work in bringing about these improvements.

#### Centre Square

The Mayor thanked officers for their work in bringing businesses to Centre Square which would bring more business and leisure to the town and an increase in people living in the town.

Councillor M Storey advised that he agreed that officers should be congratulated for their work on Centre Square. He stated that he particularly wanted to thank Kevin Parkes, the Executive Director for Growth and Place, who had recently retired from the Council after 17 years, as he had brought about huge economic regeneration in the town.

Councillor Storey stated that the Government had failed to provide adequate funding to the Council. In terms of the COVID pandemic, the local Public Health teams knew what Middlesbrough needed they just required the resources to be made available to ensure that it was deliverable.

The Mayor acknowledged the work carried out by Kevin Parkes, the former Executive Director for Growth and Place.

Councillor Cooke responded to an earlier comment regarding the lack of Youth services in the town and advised that he had worked with 3 organisations involving young people.

Councillor Cooke stated that he would like to see more capital invested in properties that were derelict or that had neglectful landlords who were letting properties become run down.

Where the Council was building new houses, it was important that the rest of the area was viable and by working on derelict property, it would improve the area and there could be job or apprenticeship opportunities.

The Mayor advised that work was ongoing in relation to this area and he invited Councillor Cooke to meet to discuss the issue.

20/24

#### **REVISED EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

As required by the Council's Constitution, a report was submitted setting out details of a revision to the Executive Scheme of Delegation.

Councillor Higgins advised that she had concerns regarding the combination of the Communities and Education portfolios, as in her view, both areas warranted an Executive Member portfolio. The Mayor indicated that in his view, the merging of the two portfolios was the right combination.

**ORDERED** that the report be noted.

20/25

#### **DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS**

Councillor M Storey raised a Point of Order in relation of paragraph 37 of the Council Procedure Rules. He stated that prior to the meeting, members of the Labour group had been advised that a number of the Executive Member questions submitted by the group had been ruled out of order, and in his view, they were relevant questions. He stated that not allowing the questions to Executive Members was not open and transparent. The Monitoring Officer later clarified, that the Point of Order raised by Councillor Storey was not valid as it did not comply with the requirements of a Point of Order, as set out in the Council's Constitution.

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).

Councillor Mawston to Deputy Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Social Care regarding Youth Service

Councillor Mawston referred to the lack of youth services in the town and the fact that Councillor Davison had operated a successful youth club for over 19 years which was self-funded. The Deputy Mayor advised that the town did not have any youth provision and this was detrimental to young people. In response to the question from Councillor Mawston with regard to whether the new Youth Service contract would be up and running by April 2021, due to the COVID situation, the Deputy Mayor advised that following a senior management restructure, £250k had been saved and this would be targeted at youth services provision. It would cover 3 areas, Universal, Targeted and Transitional provision. The procurement process was on target and youth services should be functioning from April 2021.

Councillor Mawston to Deputy Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Social Care regarding Ofsted Improvement Journey

Councillor Mawston stated that he wished to thank the Deputy Mayor and all of the officers involved in bringing about improvements in the provision of Children's Services. He queried how confident the Deputy Mayor was, that the Council would continue on this path of improvement.

The Deputy Mayor advised that the improvements had been brought about by the hard work of Senior Officers, Managers and frontline staff. Ofsted had carried out a follow-up review following the report received earlier in the year. The review had been carried out in September by the same lead investigator from the original review and this provided consistency in the approach. The focus of the review was on frontline services, in particular, the front door e.g. safeguarding assessments and the quality of thresholds. Feedback from staff was that the review had appeared to go smoothly. The formal feedback was expected to be received on 16 October but that could be changed.

The Deputy Mayor advised that a further 6 month review from a commissioner from the Department of Education was due to be carried out in November 2020.

The Council was working with an Improvement Board which consisted of representatives from the Police, Health and Education and the Council was seeing that change and progress was being made.

Councillor J Thompson to Executive Member for Environment regarding Tree Planting/Whip Planting

In response to Councillor Thompson's question with regard to whether trees that had been lost in the town would be replaced, whether the cost had been budgeted for, and whether they would have tubes around the whips to protect them, the Executive Member advised that the trees that had been vandalised, damaged or had died, would be replaced and the whips would have tubes around them for protection. There would be no additional cost to the Council as the cost had been covered via a grant.

Councillor M Storey to Executive Member for Regeneration regarding Centre Square

Councillor Storey congratulated officers and the Council on getting businesses into the town and he congratulated the previous labour administration on building the offices in the first place and in relation to bringing about Tees AMP. He emphasised how important Tees AMP was to the town in terms of manufacturing. In response to the comments from Councillor Storey, the Executive Member acknowledged the work that the previous labour administration had done in building the offices. He congratulated the Mayor and Officers for encouraging businesses to take up space in the offices, particularly during the COVID pandemic. The Executive Member also congratulated the Tees Valley Mayor for his work on Tees AMP Development.

Councillor J Walker to Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health regarding Sexual Health

In response to Councillor Walker's question on the contract for sexual health with regard to the location of the clinics and the advice provided, the Executive Member advised that the tenders were due to go out the following week. The Executive Member advised that she would take into account the comments from Councillor Walker.

**\*\*At this point of the meeting, connectivity to Councillor Furness was lost and the Mayor was able to return to the meeting. It was suggested that the Mayor provide his update to the Council.**

The Mayor appeared to still have connectivity issues and at this point the Monitoring Officer sought clarification from Councillor Storey with regard to an earlier Point of Order. It was clarified that the issue raised did not meet the requirements of a Point of Order as specified in the Council Constitution.

**\*\*The meeting was adjourned at this point to try and re-establish connectivity with the Mayor.**

Following the presentation of the Mayor's Report, questions on the Executive Member reports recommenced.

Councillor Furness to Executive Member for Regeneration regarding Future High Street Fund

In response to the question from Councillor Furness regarding funding for businesses during the lock down period, the Executive Member advised that it was very important that the town did not lose jobs or businesses. The Revenues and Benefits team had been very proactive in assisting businesses with grants and in coming up with new ideas to help businesses. The Council had restarted its Recovery Groups and they were looking at ways in which to assist businesses. The Executive Member advised that along with the Mayor he would be willing to approach Central Government with regards to any potential grant assistance for businesses

20/26 **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board submitted a report that provided an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and each of the individual Scrutiny Panels.

**ORDERED** that the report be noted.

20/27 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance submitted a report, the purpose of which was to seek the agreement of full Council to the Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance presented the report. Members were advised that it was a requirement under the Localism Act 2011, Section 38, for the Pay Policy statement to be approved by full Council.

Following a vote, it was **ORDERED** that the Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021 be approved.

20/28 **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no Urgent Items for this meeting

20/29 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

Consideration was given to Motion No.145, moved by Councillor M Storey and seconded by Councillor Hellaoui of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

**Black Community Motion**

The motion has been compiled and written in collaboration with members of our black community in Middlesbrough and highlights the issues that of greatest importance to them and their community.

This, the month of October, is black history month in the UK, Netherlands and Ireland. The purpose of having a black history month is to shine a light on the life, culture and history of our black residents, friends and family in our own community, across Britain and the world.

Black History Month 2020 is also a time to look forward and celebrate the here and now - and the future possibilities. In years gone by, October has been the only time of year when the UK talks about the achievements of Black people in Britain. Hopefully, the events of 2020 will be a catalyst for Black history to be shared much more widely - in museums, galleries, schools, universities, public places.

Whilst the recent death of George Floyd in the US has attracted significant international attention and peaceful protest, this is just one such incident in a depressing trend in many countries, including the UK.

This Council supports a message of solidarity and support to the local Black community in Middlesbrough, in recognition of the continuing battle against racial injustice, racist violence, and abuse of power, and in recognition that the right to life, liberty, and justice of every citizen is precious.

Middlesbrough Council resolves:

1. That a programme of training to be delivered to all elected members to educate Councillors in black history and issues of race and how they manifest themselves in society.
2. That Black literature and media are represented in Middlesbrough Libraries and cultural spaces and to deliver promotion of these materials within Council settings.

Middlesbrough Council notes:

1. A request to support local educational establishments to promote and embed positive Black-led education initiatives.
2. A request for a commitment from the Council to support Black-led businesses and organisations in Middlesbrough.

The Chair invited members to speak to the motion.

Councillor Arundale spoke in opposition to the motion.

Councillor Higgins spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Hellaoui spoke in support of the motion and outlined the reasons why she was seconding the motion.

Councillor Storey outlined the reasons for the motion and spoke in support of it.

The motion was put to the vote.

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

20/30 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

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

20/31 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

The Chair announced that there were two questions from Members of the Council. The details of the specific questions were included at Agenda Item 14.

Question 6/20 - Councillor Branson to Councillor Davison regarding the introduction of Clean Air Zones.

In response to the question raised, the Executive Member advised that Public Health had circulated a document in May, to all Councillors called 'Air Quality in the South Tees - As Clean As It Can Be'. Air pollution in Middlesbrough had been on a downward trend for many years. Clean Air Zones had been introduced in towns and cities where levels of nitrogen dioxide were found to be exceeding the national standard. In 2018, air quality monitoring had been carried out in two locations within the town to demonstrate that the levels of nitrogen dioxide were compliant with the national standard, and therefore there was no requirement to introduce a Clean Air Zone. The aim of the Council was to ensure that the air in the town was as clean as it could be. The Council aspired to improve and promote alternative greener transport and to develop the transport infrastructure.

Councillor Branson stated that the use of Clean Air Zones was recommended by the Government and he hoped that Middlesbrough would look at introducing Clean Air Zones in the future.

Question 7/20 - Councillor Hellaoui to the Mayor regarding Track and Trace in Middlesbrough

In response to the questions raised, the Mayor advised that Track and Trace operated at three levels, national, regional and local and in Middlesbrough all three levels operated together. In terms of success with Track and Trace, and actual numbers, 1425 cases had been tracked and 2855 people had been traced. It was believed that the local Track and Trace process was the most effective method of tracking and tracing people and the Council aimed to operate more Track and Trace locally. Testing capacity was also improving.

The Mayor advised that the Council had provided funding to various people. It had offered grants to self-employed taxi drivers to facilitate the installation of dividing screens in their vehicles and the provision of hand sanitiser. Grants had also been offered to small businesses to assist in making them COVID safe. The Council had allocated huge areas of staff to this area.

The Council had also ensured that every property in the Middlesbrough area had received free face masks. Face masks were also handed out at the Boro match and around the town in general. The Mayor stated that he envisaged that the Council would receive more powers to act locally in the future.

Councillor Hellaoui requested that members receive regular updates in terms of figures and statistics in relation to COVID and the Track and Trace system. The Mayor advised that he would provide updates.

20/32 **LOCALISM ACT 2011 - REPEAL OF LEGISLATION - DEALING WITH PETITIONS**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider the Council's revised Petitions Scheme.

The report was considered by the Constitution and Members' Development Committee on 24 July 2020 where it was recommended that the revised scheme be submitted to full Council for approval, subject to the threshold for the number of signatures required, before a petition can be debated at full Council, being revised from 1500 to 500 signatures.

Following a vote, it was **ORDERED** that the revised Petitions Scheme be approved.

20/33 **UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report outlining details of general updates to the Constitution and requesting approval of the revised Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.

Following a vote, it was **ORDERED** that the general updates to the Constitution be noted and that the revised Financial and Contract Procedure Rules be approved.

20/34 **COUNCIL BUDGET MEETINGS - CHANGE OF DATES**

The Chair advised that it was proposed to change the dates of the Council meetings that were scheduled to discuss the Budget from, 3 February and 3 March 2021, to 24 February 2021 and 5 March 2021, in order to fit in with the budget process.

**ORDERED** that the change of Council meeting dates to consider the Council's budget, be noted.