

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 7 July 2021.

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

OFFICERS: B Carr, C Benjamin, S Bonner, C Breheny, Z Farrow, D Johnson, S Reynolds, K Whitmore and S Lightwing

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors L Garvey, T Furness, S Hill, D Rooney, A Waters and C Wright

21/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

21/13 **MINUTES- COUNCIL - 26 MAY 2021**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 May 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

21/14 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair of the Council announced with sadness, the death of Councillor June Goodchild on 6 July 2021.

June was elected in May 2015 to serve the Ladgate Ward. June was a member of a number of different scrutiny panels and was a long standing member of the Licensing Committee.

The Chair advised that, prior to her election as a Councillor, June was recognised in a number of different ways. June was made an MBE in 2007 for her voluntary work in Easterside and she also received a Mayor's award on 30 January 2013.

All present stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Councillor McTigue, Councillor Mawston and Councillor Higgins paid tribute to June Goodchild.

21/15 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY).**

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

21/16 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

June Goodchild

The Mayor paid tribute to June Goodchild and sent his condolences to her family.

Covid

The Mayor advised that infection rates were growing and the North East had one of the highest rates of infections. The Mayor stated that the link between infection rates, hospitalisation and death was breaking down. He stated that there was still a link and everyone should still follow the rules, but people should not be as fearful as they were, they should move forward with cautious confidence, however everyone should be encouraged to have the vaccination.

The Mayor stated that Middlesbrough had a very young population compared to the everywhere in the Tees Valley and the North East except Newcastle. Vaccinations were generally being targeted at older people, and as a consequence, Middlesbrough had carried out less vaccinations on young people compared to other towns. The Mayor advised that the people rolling out the vaccinations and the Public Health Team were working hard to ensure that everyone that was entitled to, had access to vaccinations. Middlesbrough had some hard to reach people, and that there was a link between deprivation and people not having the vaccine. He advised that Middlesbrough had more deprivation than anywhere in the North East and although it was a challenge, everything was being done to ensure people were vaccinated.

Crime

The Mayor advised that a meeting had been held with the new Police and Crime Commissioner. The Mayor had been talking to residents and their view was that dangerous crime was polluting the streets and intimidating the public and trying to intimidate their rivals. This was not just an issue in Middlesbrough, it was a national and international problem. Cleveland Police did not have as high an armed response compared to other forces compared to the level of violent crime. The Mayor advised that he was against arming the police. The Police needed to take control.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Mayor advised that he was embarrassed and ashamed at the state of some back alleys. The state of the alleys was damaging mental health and investment in the town. More cameras were due to be installed. The Mayor stated that in the past, Middlesbrough had not been tough enough in relation to the enforcement against people carrying out fly-tipping. He referred to a recent fly-tipping case where a vehicle suspected of being used to carry out fly-tipping had been seized. There was now a dedicated fly-tipping squad to enable more enforcement action to take place.

Children's Services

The Mayor advised that there had been historical issues with Middlesbrough's Children's Services which had resulted in it being the worst and most expensive in the country.

The Mayor advised that due to the hard work of staff the service had improved and all the right steps were being taken to ensure continuous improvement.

Queen's Jubilee

The Mayor advised that it was the Queen's Jubilee in 2022, and as part of the celebrations, the Queen usually awarded "city status" to a number of towns. Middlesbrough had applied for city status a number of times in the past, but had been unsuccessful.

The Mayor advised that he was interested in applying, but it should be down to the people of Middlesbrough, the stakeholders and the businesses to decide whether Middlesbrough should apply for city status. The initial response to a survey had indicated that most people would support an application for city status. He advised that he and the Deputy Mayor would be meeting the university, the college and the Northern school of arts and other large employers to gain support for the bid. Councillors would also have the opportunity to vote on the bid.

Councillor McTigue advised that at the moment there was a reliance on councillors to report fly-tipping. Councillor McTigue stated that fly-tipping should be removed immediately, but at the moment, there did not appear to be enough staff that were aware of where the hot spots were located. The hot spots needed to be identified to staff so that they go out every other day to inspect the areas. Councillor McTigue advised that she had sent the Mayor two photos of instances of fly-tipping and she stated that it must have taken weeks for the those areas to get into such a state. Councillor McTigue stated that although councillors would continue to report instances of fly-tipping, there should not be a reliance on them to do so.

The Mayor advised that fly-tipping was an issue and he urged people to keep reporting any instances to the Council.

In relation to the proposed bid by the town for city status, Councillor McTigue queried with regard to what the parameters were in order for the town to bid for city status, what the cost would be and what benefits it would bring to the town.

In terms of bidding for city status, the Mayor advised that there was no requirement to have a cathedral or a university, but the town needed to put a good case forward to demonstrate how they would benefit from city status. The Mayor advised that he would find out the costs, and would be willing to discuss the bid with any councillor that was interested.

Councillor Cooke referred to crime and he indicated that although he was in favour of enforcement, one of the things that was concerning was the lack of support for victims. The PCC had removed the funding for Newport's Victim Care Advice and Support Officer. If the Council were unable to find funding, the post would no longer exist from September 2021. Councillor Cooke stated that he would like to see the role retained as people who were the victims of crime needed to be supported. The current post holder was doing an excellent job and over the last two years had saved many peoples' lives. The importance of this role needed to be recognised by the police.

In terms of reporting of fly-tipping, Councillor Cooke expressed concern regarding the fact that reports of fly-tipping by Street Wardens were not being treated as seriously as reports from councillors. He requested that an audit be carried out in respect of fly-tipping identified by wardens to see if fly-tipping identified with a Street Warden sticker was being removed.

Councillor M Storey stated that fly-tipping was becoming a real issue within the ward because people were not willing to wait twelve weeks for the free bulky waste collection service which resulted in fly-tipping. There was currently over 500 outstanding fly-tipping cases, and Councillor Storey stated that whilst he praised the efforts of the fly-tipping squad and enforcement, there needed to be an audit to look into how the fly-tipping and the bulky waste collection was functioning and to look at how the Council could do it differently and whether it could be done in a better way.

Councillor Storey stated that he recognised that there was a major problem with Children's Services and officers had worked really hard to resolve the issues. There were underlying social issues that had caused these problems. Councillor Storey stated that the Mayor had mentioned deprivation being a pressure. There had been cuts to Sure Start and cuts to Public Sector Funding over many years. The support for early help to prevent children being taken into care in the first place was no longer there, so the council was having to deal with issues once the children had already been taken into care. It would be much better to deal with issues with children in the early stages to prevent them having to be taken into care.

In terms of the bid for "city status", Councillor Storey advised that he would be very supportive of any bid, it was ambitious and Middlesbrough was just as important as any other city.

The Mayor agreed that Children's Services was a big challenge, the town had massive deprivation. Other deprived areas did better than Middlesbrough.

The Mayor advised that fly-tipping was a crime that affected people's mental health and it should not be linked with the bulky waste service. Middlesbrough provided the bulky waste service for free.

Councillor Higgins stated that fly-tipping was an issue faced by all councilors. More staff were needed to deal with the issue. The staff currently employed for this purpose were doing a great job, but more staff were needed.

The Mayor stated that the problem in the past was that the Council hardly ever prosecuted fly-tippers but there had been an increase in enforcement due to the new fly-tipping flying squad. The Mayor stated that the team were doing an incredible job and there was a new attitude from the Council in relation to enforcement action against fly-tippers.

Councillor McTigue queried whether cameras could be installed in known hot spots.

The Mayor advised that 100 new cameras had already been installed around the town at a cost of £4000 each and it was agreed at Executive that additional cameras would be

purchased. Members should indicate if cameras were required within their ward and this would be taken into consideration when placing the cameras. The Mayor advised that cameras deterred crime, made residents feel safer and helped catch criminals.

21/17 **REVISED EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Mayor outlined a number of changes to his Executive Scheme of Delegation. He advised that the new Executive was smaller, focussed, committed to Middlesbrough and it cost less.

ORDERED that the changes to the Executive Scheme of Delegation be noted.

21/18 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS BOOKLET**

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).

Question on the Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance report

Councillor Thompson in relation to the pot hole programme.

In response to Councillor Thompson's query with regard to whether the pot hole programme had ended, how much the programme had cost and whether the remaining pot holes would be repaired, the Executive Member advised that the programme was ongoing. Engineers were assessing the remaining pot holes and would prioritise them to ensure that the worst pot holes would be repaired first. In terms of the cost of the programme, the Executive Member advised that he did not have the information to hand, but he would forward it to Councillor Thompson in due course.

Questions on the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities report

Councillor Uddin in relation to alleygates.

In response to the question from Councillor Uddin about upgrading and decorating back alleys and the installation of alley gates, the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities stated that the installation of new alley gates was not just about the cost, other factors needed to be considered such as rights of way and who would have responsibility for the alley gates. The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities advised that the Head of Stronger Communities was currently looking into the legalities surrounding the installation of new alley gates and an update would be provided to the councillor once this process was completed.

The alley project was progressing well. 6 alleys had already been completed and 13 alleys were on the waiting list to be completed. The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities advised the councillor to contact her if he wished to go ahead with transforming alleys without the alley gates.

Councillor Branson in relation to community safety - motor bike nuisance.

In response to the question from Councillor Branson in relation to motor bike nuisance and the possibility of installing CCTV and other preventative measures, the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities advised that off road motor bikes were a blight on the community as well as being noisy and dangerous. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that there had been issues with motor bikes on the fields in Coulby Newham, and the Council could look at the use of CCTV to tackle this as well as other measures. Operation Endurance was intelligence led and they could be asked to specifically look at the Coulby Newham area. As part of their work, they seized the vehicles that were causing the nuisance.

Councillor J Walker in relation to keeping members informed of activities within their wards.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker requesting if all councillors could be informed of any work or initiatives taking place in their wards, in advance of the work taking place, the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities thanked Councillor Walker for her comments and for wanting to be involved in the litter picking initiative. The Deputy Mayor stated that all those members of the public who had taken part in the litter picks should be thanked for their participation. In terms of councillors being made aware of upcoming litter picks, the Deputy Mayor advised that councillors had been sent emails advising of the dates, the information was placed on the Council website. There was a specific website page dedicated to litter picking.

Councillor Walker advised that some alleyways in her ward had been refurbished but she had not been informed. The Deputy Mayor advised that an email had been sent to all councillors in May regarding the Keep Borough Tidy initiative. Some councillors had been involved. Residents and residents groups needed to be encouraged to become involved in the initiative.

Councillor Cooper stated that he was pleased to see that Councillor Walker was passionate about becoming involved in the litter picking initiative. He advised that he had been involved with the community champion initiative prior to becoming a councillor. The groups involved in litter picking were not employed by the Council, and they sent emails out advising where the litter picking was being carried out, He stated that he was trying to make sure that the full bags of litter were picked up straight after the litter picking had ended. He stated that the volunteers deserved thanks for going out in all weather and he stated that he would be willing to pull together a timetable of litter picks and circulate it to all councillors.

Question on the Mayor's Executive Member report

Councillor Uddin in relation to recruitment of social workers

In response to the question in relation to the recruitment of permanent social workers, the Mayor acknowledged that there were issues with different rates of pay being offered to social workers around the country and various different incentives used by authorities to attract social workers together with issue around the number of cases that social workers were required to handle. The Council employed a number of agency staff but this was expensive so it was important to attract permanent staff to the role. The Mayor advised that he could not speak in place of the Director of Children's Services so he would get a response from the Director in relation to this issue.

Councillor Uddin in relation to the rough sleepers initiative

In response to Councillor Uddin's comment in relation to the excellent work being carried out in relation to rough sleepers, the Mayor advised that the staff were working very hard to assist rough sleepers, but sadly, some rough sleepers chose to sleep on the street although facilities were available to assist them. The Mayor commented on the fantastic work being carried out by the team.

Questions on Executive Member for Education report

Councillor Hellaoui posed the following questions in the absence of the Executive Member:

(Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Question one:

Your report states that Middlesbrough's position is 9th in the country in terms of timely completion of timely EHCP plans question. How is this position related to numbers of young people who apply for EHCP plans across Middlesbrough compared with the rest of the country?

Question 2:

How many EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) did Middlesbrough schools process in 2020 2021?

How many children do we have in Middlesbrough's Primary Schools with EHCPs and how

many are there in Secondary Schools and other school environments?

Question three:

How many completed EHCPs completed in 20 weeks were actually successful?
How many did not get past this application process?

Question four:

What progress our children making with EHCP plans?
How do we monitor their progress?
How do we track that the plans are effective?

Question five:

What percentage of youngsters with EHCPs continue their education into FE/HE?
What proportion of children with EHCPs are Children Looked After?
(Are our CLA prioritised in terms of of the EHCP plans?)

Question six:

What data do we have that links Youth Offending with EHCPs?

Question seven:

Are there are limits to the number of EHCPs any particular group of schools can apply for?

Question eight?

It says in your report:
"Each year SEN2 data is published nationally which shares key information regarding a number of SEN data sets".

Could you confirm exactly what is included in the data sets?

21/19 **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.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

21/20 **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no Urgent items submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

21/21 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from Members submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

21/22 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

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

21/23 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

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

21/24 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The report in relation to the Community Governance Review was deferred to the

Council meeting scheduled for 28 July 2021.

21/25 **UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The report in relation to the Update to the Council Constitution was deferred to the Council meeting scheduled for 28 July 2021.

21/26 **COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES - VACANCIES**

Council received a report which sought Members' approval to nominations for appointment, arising from vacancies deferred at the Annual Meeting of Council and resignations from Committees.

The report included a list of current vacancies on various committees and Outside Bodies and nominations were put forward at the meeting by individual members.

ORDERED that the following vacancies allocated in accordance with the wishes of the political groups and other councillors be approved by Council:

Committees

Live Well South Tees Board
2 Vacancies: Councillor Thompson appointed
Still 1 Vacancy

Constitution and Members Development Committee
1 Vacancy: Councillor J Thompson appointed

Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel
1 Vacancy: Chair of Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel: Open to all Members of Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel: Councillor McCabe appointed

Licensing Committee
1 Vacancy: Councillor McCabe appointed

Outside Bodies Vacancies

Appendix A – Appointments by Council

River Tees Port Health Authority
1 Vacancy – Councillor Branson appointed

Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Committee
1 Vacancy: Originally a MICA place. No nominations
Open to all Councillors: Councillor Coupe appointed

Northumbria Regional Flood Defence Committee (will also be required to sit on the Tees Valley Flood Risk Partnership)
1 Vacancy – Open to all Councillors: Councillor Cooper appointed

Tees Valley Community Foundation – The Endowment Funds Advisory Board
1 Vacancy – Councillor Uddin appointed

Appendix C – Appointments by Executive

(ANEC) Resources Task and Finish Group
1 Vacancy – Open to all Councillors - No Nominations - 1 Vacancy

Family Placement Panel
1 Vacancy – Open to all Councillors - Councillor Hellaoui appointed

Tennis World
2 Vacancies – Councillor Davison and Councillor Mawston appointed

21/27 **APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY RECORDER OF MIDDLESBROUGH**

Council received a report which sought approval to the appointment of His Honour Judge Paul Watson QC as Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough, with immediate effect and for the duration of his tenure of the post of Senior Circuit Judge at Teesside Combined Court Centre.

ORDERED that the appointment of His Honour Judge Paul Watson QC as Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough, with immediate effect and for the duration of his tenure of the post of Senior Circuit Judge at Teesside Combined Court Centre be approved.

21/28 **STANHOPE CASTLE UPDATE**

The Mayor provided members with an update in relation to Stanhope Castle.

He explained the background to the issue. The Mayor stated that the Council would do everything it could to improve communication with the people affected.

The Mayor advised members that when the tribunal provided the Council with guidance to say what it was able to do, the Council would follow that guidance.

The Mayor advised that the Council would provide regular updates to the people affected, even if there was nothing to report.

ORDERED that the update be noted.

21/29 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

ORDERED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

21/30 **EXEMPT REPORT - REVIEW OF POLITICAL SUPPORT**

Council received an exempt report to consider the level of support provided to political groups.

Dependent upon the outcome of Council considerations it was recommended that Council adopt the proposed Political Assistant Protocol.

ORDERED as follows:

1. That Council retains the Political Assistant role and allows for up to 3 x FTE Political Assistants, at the Grade and salary as indicated in the report. The number of hours required by each group to be (up to 1FTE - 37hrs) subject to the requisite 10% membership. Recruitment would be subject to Council recruitment policies however appointment and number of hours would be subject to the wishes of the groups who were entitled to a Political Assistant as per the Act.
2. That Council adopts the proposed Political Assistant Protocol.
3. That the Constitution be amended to reflect the revised arrangements for the level of support provided to political groups.