

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Virtual Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held on 2 September 2020.

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

OFFICERS: S Bonner, C Benjamin, C Breheny, B Carr, R Horniman, A Humble, S Lightwing, C Lunn, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, K Whitmore, I Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Saunders, Councillor P Storey, Councillor J A Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None Declared

1 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 15 JANUARY 2020 AND 26 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the Ordinary Council meetings held on 15 January 2020 and 26 February 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 MINUTES - EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - 12 FEBRUARY 2020 AND 29 JULY 2020

The minutes of the Extraordinary Council meetings held on 12 February 2020 and 29 July 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first ordinary meeting of the Council.

Members were advised of the process for asking questions at the meeting.

4 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

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

5 MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT

The Mayor stated that he had three things that he wished to discuss.

COVID-19

The Mayor advised that the number of Covid-19 cases in Middlesbrough was increasing. Covid-19 was a critical health and economic concern. If the town was to go into lockdown it could affect jobs and livelihoods. The current number of positive Covid-19 tests in Middlesbrough was 35 per 100,000. This number was high and if the town had up to 14-18 new cases a day, the Government could seriously consider imposing restrictions on the town, which would be bad for people's health, lives and jobs. The Mayor reiterated the current safety measures in place, in terms of the covering of faces, keeping a safe distance and regular washing of hands.

The Mayor advised that many of the new cases were coming from a variety of sources including from people that had visited pubs and restaurants across the town and he advised that bad working practices in these premises could contribute to the increase in Covid-19

cases. He stated that business owners/managers had a responsibility to protect the people of the town. He advised that the staff working within premises should be wearing a face covering. The Mayor reiterated that if the number of new cases did not decrease, the Government would consider imposing a lockdown and this would affect the jobs and health and well-being of many of the people in the town.

Fly-Tipping

The Mayor advised that during the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the people of the town felt justified to fly-tip. The situation had improved since the tips had re-opened but it was still an issue. There was also issues with street dealing with drugs during the day. The Police had made many arrests and were doing everything they could. The Mayor urged people to report any instances of anti-social behaviour and where possible, to obtain evidence and photographs and to pass the evidence on to the police. He stated that in some cases he felt the Police and the Council were letting the town down.

Environment - Green Plan

The Mayor advised that it was the ambition of the Council to become carbon-neutral by 2029 and for the town to become carbon-neutral by 2039. The Council would try and reduce this timescale if possible. He stated that the current recycling rates in Middlesbrough were not very good. He advised that the Council intended to re-commence planting more trees and flowers. He stated that people should come forward with any ideas in terms of the Green Plan.

Councillor Cooke stated that Middlesbrough was a travel hub for the Tees Valley area, he queried that if the town was forced to go into lockdown, how it would affect the ability for people to use the bus and train stations?

Councillor Cooke also stated that he would like to see an increase in the teams dealing with fly-tipping. If there was an increase in evictions, this could mean an increase of unwanted furniture being placed onto the streets and the Council would struggle to deal with it.

The Mayor advised that Middlesbrough was considered a travel hub for the region. He stated that the Government could decide on a range of different measures in terms of imposing a lockdown, and at the moment it was unclear how this would affect the town as it had imposed a number of different measures on those towns that had been subject to a lockdown.

The Mayor stated that tackling fly-tipping was essential. He stated that the people carrying out the fly-tipping needed to be caught and prosecuted. He stated that sometimes landlords were driving this and sometimes it was residents. The courts had been closed and there was a backlog of cases. He advised that the Council had obtained a grant which would facilitate up to 500 new cameras to be installed and some of these cameras could be installed in alleyways.

The Mayor advised that sometimes areas received negative comments but he advised of a fishmongers on Parliament Road that had been trading for 30 years and he advised that it provided a great service at great prices.

Councillor Polano queried how the Council could make penalties for street drug dealing more stringent.

The Mayor advised that the issue of penalties for crime was a criminal matter but the Council was frustrated at the soft treatment for offenders in the courts. He stated that there should be tougher sentences and he stated that the police were trying hard and they were receptive to representations. He stated that pressure needed to be placed on the legal system and with the installation of more cameras in the streets it could assist in gaining evidence.

The Mayor referred to bin rummaging and he stated that cameras needed to be installed in back alleys to help deter this practice.

Councillor Mawston queried whether a person who had taken a voluntary Covid-19 test

received any advice between the time they had taken the test and the time they received the result.

The Mayor advised that these people would be advised to isolate if they were having symptoms until they received the result.

Councillor M Storey advised that he offered support to the Mayor and Council officers in respect of the fight against Covid-19 and he advised that he and the labour group would do whatever it could to publicise any information to help protect public health and assist businesses in understanding their responsibilities. He queried with regard to the percentage of people that were being tested in Middlesbrough testing stations and how many people were being sent further afield to undertake a test.

In terms of drug dealing, Councillor Storey advised that the Councillors had raised awareness of this issue and reported many instances that they were aware of taking place in the town and this had resulted in raids and significant arrests. He stated that the police service had lost 500 jobs and Simon Clarke in his role as Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government needed to be contacted to take the case to Government to push for more resources. Councillor Storey stated that the Chief Constable was doing an excellent job but he needed more resources.

Councillor Storey stated that Parliament Road sometimes received bad press and he stated that it was important to emphasise the good things in the area, whilst recognising and dealing with the negative issues. In terms of the issues with fly-tipping, Councillor Storey stated that it was important that the Council was provided with the necessary resources to deal with the issue.

The Mayor stated that he was not sure of the percentage of people that were being tested in Middlesbrough testing stations and how many people were being sent further afield to undertake a test but he had heard of people being referred to Darlington and further afield to obtain a Covid-19 test. He stated that there was clearly an issue and he stated that people should be able to have access to a Covid-19 test quickly, in a location near to them and this needed to be sorted out.

The Mayor acknowledged that the Police had lost 500 jobs and they had lost funding which did make their jobs harder. He stated that he had no control over whether the Police would obtain more funding but it was up to the Council to advise the Police what the Council's priorities were in terms of policing.

In terms of Parliament Road, the Mayor acknowledged that the area did have some issues, but it was important to promote the good things about the area.

Councillor McTigue stated that rummaging through bins should be classed as a crime. In terms of fly-tipping, keeping on top of the issue was a full-time job. Councillor McTigue referred to fly-tipping on land which was owned by the Thirteen Group, who were slow to deal with issues of fly-tipping. Councillor McTigue highlighted that there were three or four hot spots in terms of fly-tipping and these need to be monitored more closely.

The Mayor advised that he would speak to the Chief Executive of Thirteen and the appropriate Council officer regarding this issue. He stated that dealing with fly-tipping was a dilemma. If the Council removed the items the next day, people might place more items out as it was removed quickly, so the Council could inadvertently be reinforcing bad behaviour.

Councillor McTigue advised that the previous Mayor had advised that if people continued to fly-tip the items would not be removed.

Councillor Coupe advised that the Mayor had the backing of the Conservative Group and all Councillors in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. He stated that some people struggled with social distancing, particularly in supermarkets. Shops needed instructions, not guidance, as if the issue was not dealt with, the town could be subject to a lockdown.

The Mayor agreed that there should be legislation. He stated that people who worked in shops or pubs should be required to wear a face covering and pressure should be placed on businesses to reinforce this. The Mayor referred to a supermarket on Corporation Road with regard to the number of people walking into the premises without a face mask who had not been challenged. He stated that there was no clear guidance but he wanted Councillors to speak constructively to businesses within their Wards to reinforce the need to wear face coverings and to adhere to social distancing.

6 **REVISED EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

As required by the Council's Constitution, a report was submitted setting out the revised membership of the Executive appointed by the Mayor as at Appendix B together with details of the amended Executive Scheme of Delegation as at Appendix A, delegating responsibility for certain functions to the Executive, Individual Executive Members, joint arrangements and, where appropriate, Officers of the Council.

The Mayor advised that after a year serving on the Executive, Councillor Cooper intended to focus on Ward matters. As a consequence, the Mayor had appointed Councillor Mieka Smiles to the Executive Member for Education and Skills portfolio on an interim basis.

The Mayor also added the following new delegation to his Executive Scheme of Delegation:-

Decision Making by Chief Executive

The Chief Executive of the Council, or any officer nominated by the Chief Executive as his Deputy in this regard, will have delegated authority to make Executive decisions of a policy, financial and operational nature in response to the Covid-19 emergency.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

7 **DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS**

Councillor Cooke moved a Motion without Notice to suspend Standing Orders in relation to the following item to enable all of the questions that had been submitted in relation to Executive Member reports to be asked.

The Monitoring Officer sought clarification with regard to which part of the Council Procedure Rules the motion related to. Councillor Cooke confirmed that it was in relation to the time allowed for questions on Executive Member reports.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Motion needed to be seconded. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Rooney.

The motion was put to the vote.

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

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).

The Chair advised that as 26 questions on Executive Member reports had been received, he would invite Councillors to put their questions until the allocated time for Executive Member questions had expired. Any remaining questions could be emailed by the member to the appropriate Executive Member.

Cllr Uddin to the Deputy Mayor re Potholes

Councillor Uddin stated that he noted that 20 weeks had been allocated to deal with the issues of potholes and 8 weeks of the allocated time had gone by and to date, only 5 Wards

had received attention. Councillor Uddin advised that there were 12 roads that needed attention in his Ward and he queried whether the Deputy Mayor could confirm that the roads that still required repairs to potholes would be dealt with.

Councillor High advised that delays to the programmed works had been caused by the weather, as some of the work could not be carried out. He wanted to ensure that each Ward had a full week of intervention. Where weather played a part in delaying works, there was no intention to cut the amount of time in the Ward required to carry out the work. Following the commencement of the repair programme, it was discovered that some Wards required more work than anticipated, and as a consequence it was agreed to extend the time in those Wards to complete the required works. As a result of the programme being extended, it was likely that it would run beyond the anticipated twenty weeks but all Wards would receive the amount of time needed to deal with the work required to repair the potholes. Councillor High acknowledged that following the completion of the planned programme of works, some Wards might still have some minor repairs that required attention, but that could be dealt with in due course.

Cllr Branson to Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health re Homelessness.

Councillor Branson stated that he noted with concern that the number of people using temporary accommodation had doubled and there had been an increase in evictions from this type of accommodation. With the economic effect of Covid-19 including increased unemployment and lower incomes, Councillor Branson queried whether there would be an increase in the number of people evicted from temporary accommodation and if this was the case, what the Council would do to deal with the issue?

Councillor Davison advised that there was still lots of people in temporary accommodation but the Council was working with them. The Council had applied for a grant, which if successful, would enable the Council to build its own accommodation for people who were on the streets to move into. The outcome of the grant application would be known in a few weeks. The Council had found some of the residents who were in temporary accommodation, permanent accommodation, but unfortunately, some had been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour. The Council was working with all landlords with regard to this issue. Councillor Davison highlighted that all of the people who were currently housed in temporary accommodation were single, there were no families currently housed in temporary accommodation.

Councillor Arundale to the Executive Member for Culture and Communities re Telephone Boxes

Councillor Arundale queried the cost involved in moving the phone boxes that were located next to the town hall to revitalise and use them for other purposes. Councillor Arundale advised that the reason he was asking the question was because he had been advised that the Council could not afford £1 to adopt a redundant phone box in the Brookfield area which could save lives.

The Executive Member advised that the red telephone boxes were an important part of the town's heritage. Many members of the public had commented when they were taken away. The cost to refurbish the phone boxes amounted to £13k because the phone boxes had special heritage protection so had to be restored by a specialist. Both she and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance had tried to lower the cost of refurbishment. The costs involved commissioning an artist which amounted to £12k and the refurbishment of the phone boxes which had been left to rot and disintegrate. The revitalised phone boxes would add a vibrancy to the area and were an important part of the town's heritage.

In terms of the phone box referred to by Councillor Arundale, the Executive Member advised that the inclusion of a defibrillator was a very good idea and she understood that the Executive Member for Environment was progressing this issue, with a view to the community taking over responsibility for the phone box.

Councillor Hubbard to the Executive Member for Culture and Communities re Motorbike nuisance

Councillor Hubbard commented on the fact that the Council was developing a multi-agency motor vehicle nuisance plan, working closely with Cleveland Police and local social housing providers with the aim of pooling resources to tackle the issues effectively with long term investment into the solutions. It was a bane on many people's lives. He queried how this would operate between the Council and the Police and what methods would be used to get the information out into the public domain.

The Executive Member advised that she understood the frustration with regard to this issue. It was a safety issue because the speed the motorbikes travelled, posed a real risk. There was already a Police operation called Operation Endurance and the purpose of it was to tackle off-road vehicles and the associated anti-social behaviour. The Neighbourhood Safety Team which involved Street Wardens and the Police used CCTV, information from residents and patrols to identify any hotspots. Councillors could also supply any information they had with regard to this issue. Areas were targeted and the Police used off-road bikes and offenders were identified and they were then dealt with. Ward Councillors could assist by disseminating information to the public.

Councillor Rathmell to Executive Member for Culture and Communities re Operation Talla

Councillor Rathmell referred to the joint approach with Cleveland Police and Middlesbrough Council to patrol 'vulnerable locations' which could include places and businesses which could be on the receiving end of the public who didn't want to abide by the rules or targeting of areas where people were congregating such as the town centre and Parliament Road in Newport Ward.

Councillor Rathmell queried what percentage of this approach was targeted at the two areas compared to the rest of the town and he queried whether this could be increased or if there was a limit on the number of Street Wardens as the member stated that he was unsure of the number of new Street Wardens since last May.

The Executive Member advised that at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Police and the Street Wardens had carried out joint patrols, where possible, in the high crime anti-social behaviour areas of the town which included Newport, North Moorsby and some of the essential town centre areas. This was to encourage social distancing, the keep left initiative and to reinforce government guidance.

The Executive Member explained that Operation Talla was underpinned by 4 key principles, which were Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce with the aim of keeping communities safe.

In terms of what activity had taken place outside those area in terms of the number of arrests etc., the Executive Member advised that she had asked for information regarding that issue, in addition to information relating to the Nunthorpe area. Since July 16, Street Wardens had carried out 19 night patrols in the trouble hotspots including The Avenue park, however no issues had been identified. The Neighbourhood Safety Officer was currently investigating the complaints that had been submitted, and the Street Wardens were increasing patrols. It was also intended to connect CCTV in the area.

Councillor Cooke to Executive Member for Culture and Communities re Operation Talla

Councillor Cooke queried with regard to what crimes had been committed in the area and he queried whether resources were being taken away from dealing other crimes. He indicated that there was a large amount of drug dealing in the area and resources might be better used dealing with this issue rather than dealing with people congregating in the area.

The Executive Member stated that she noted the point but stated that both issues were important at this time due to the COVID pandemic. The Executive Member advised that she would request the details of the crimes committed in the area and forward it to the member in due course.

Councillor Coupe to Executive Member for Environment re Green Waste

Councillor Coupe referred to green waste collections and the fact that they were currently 4 weekly. He stated that there was a proposal to make bin collections 2 weekly next year and he queried with regard to the plans for blue recycling waste. He queried whether there was any proposals to return to 2 weekly green waste collections. He stated that they 4 weekly collections had caused issues with residents. He advised that there had been a proposal for people to be able to pay for green waste collection but that was no longer an option. Councillor Coupe urged the Executive Member to reinstate 2 weekly green waste collections.

The Executive Member advised that there was no proposals to change to 4 weekly green waste collections for the following year. The green waste collection would revert back to 2 weekly in due course.

Councillor M Storey indicated that his question to the Executive Member for Environment had been withdrawn.

Councillor Thompson to Executive Member for Environment re Pot Holes

Councillor Thompson queried whether the Executive Member was confident that the budget set to deal with the repair of potholes programme was adequate and she queried with regard to whether Council staff were being used to carry out the repairs or whether it had been outsourced.

The Executive Member advised that he was confident that the budget was adequate as funding had been accessed by the permit scheme in addition to funding that had been brought forward from next year's budget. The programme was on track and work was currently being carried out in the Kader Ward. In terms of the work that was being carried out as part of the repair programme, Council staff were carrying out the majority of the repair work to potholes, but the larger planing service repairs were being carried out by sub-contractors.

Councillor Wright to Executive Member for Environment re Flood Alleviation Scheme

Councillor Wright advised that one of the unintentional side effects of the scheme was that had been an increase in rats, particularly in Easterside. He advised that he had spoken to the Environmental Team who had indicated that they would investigate this issue and get back to him. As he had not received an update, Councillor Wright queried whether the Executive Member would meet with him to look into the issue of the increase in rats in the area.

The Executive Member advised Councillor Wright that he would arrange a meeting with him to try and solve the issue.

Councillor Furness to Executive Member for Regeneration re Planning Reforms

Councillor Furness queried how the recent White paper would affect the Planning Committee and the Local Plan. He stated that the Local Plan was already out of date.

The Executive Member advised that the legislation was still being formed. He advised that there had already been changes to the Local Plan and there could be further changes dependant on the legislation. It was a 10 year Local Plan set out in 2014 so the Council was still within the time-frame.

The Chair queried whether Councillor Uddin had a further question. Councillor Uddin confirmed that he did not have any more questions.

Councillor Cooke to Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health re HMOs and Housing

Councillor Cooke queried with regard to what the Council had done in relation to people that had been placed in HMOs or shared housing to assist in helping them to shield, given that they only had shared access to toilet and bathroom facilities.

The Executive Member advised that she would have to come back to the member with regard to the use of bathrooms. The Council had provided the people with food and mobile phones in case they needed to contact anyone and were required to isolate. In terms of bathrooms, the Executive Member advised that she believed that they were required to share a bathroom, but they had been supplied with all the necessary cleansing equipment.

Councillor Furness to Executive Member for Environment re Electric Charging Stations

Councillor Furness advised that the Council had indicated that they intended to provide public charging points for electric vehicles and he queried whether the Executive Member could give an update with regard to the current status with this initiative.

The Executive Member advised that it was intended to install electric charging stations at Resolution House to accommodate the Council's new fleet of electric vehicles as part of the Council's Green Strategy. It was hoped to install public charging points in the town as soon as the Council received funding from the Transport Action Group.

The Chair advised that the time for Executive member questions had expired. He advised members that they could submit any remaining questions that they had given prior notification of to the appropriate Executive member.

8 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. Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had continued to hold meetings throughout the COVID pandemic and Scrutiny Panel's had commenced meetings in July. The Chair thanked all Scrutiny Panel members and support staff for their commitment to the scrutiny process during this time.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

9 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET / PROJECTED OUTTURN POSITION AT QUARTER ONE 2020/21

The Head of Financial Planning & Support and the Mayor submitted a report in relation to 2020/21 Quarter One Projected Outturn and the use of reserves for Covid-19 pressures.

The report advised members of the Council's financial position at Quarter One 2020/21, including the projected effect of Covid-19 on the Council's finances. It sought approval from the Council for the use of the General Fund Reserve to fund the total projected overspend in 2020/21.

The report also sought approval from the Council for the transfer of the balance on the Investment Fund Contingency Reserve to the General Fund Reserve, to mitigate the effect of the use of the General Fund Reserve to fund the total projected revenue overspend in 2020/21.

In accordance with statutory regulations a recorded vote was taken by roll call of those Members present at that time, the results of which were as follows:-

Votes For: (44)

The Mayor (A Preston), Councillors Arundale, Bell, Branson, Cooke, Cooper, Coupe, Davison, Dean, Dodds, Furness, Garvey, Goodchild, Hellaoui, Higgins, High, Hill, C Hobson, J Hobson, Hubbard, Hussain, Jones, Lewis, Mason, Mawston, McCabe, McIntyre, McTigue, Nugent, Platt, Polano, Purvis, Rathmell, Rooney, Rostron, Sands, Smiles, M Storey, Thompson, Uddin, S Walker, Waters, Wilson, Wright

Votes Against (0)

ORDERED as follows:

1. That the Council notes the 2020/21 revenue budget Quarter One total projected outturn of £4.435m as reported to Executive on 18 August 2020, representing a £31,000 overspend on non-Covid-19 elements and the estimated financial effect of Covid-19 in 2020/21 of £4.404m, and also notes the proposed actions to address this.
2. That the Council approves the proposed use of the General Fund Reserve to fund the total projected overspend of £4.435m in 2020/21.
3. That the Council notes that a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update report will be presented to Executive on 29 September 2020.
4. That the Council notes the proposed reductions and additions to the Council's current Investment Strategy, and that these will be submitted for approval by Executive as part of the MTFP update report on 29 September 2020.
5. That the Council approves the transfer of the balance on the Investment Fund Contingency Reserve of £4.928m to the General Fund Reserve, to mitigate the effect on the General Fund Reserve of the total projected revenue overspend in 2020/21.

10 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/2021**

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

The Executive member 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.

The Executive Member advised that if an officer opted to take early retirement, the Council could agree a package of up to £100k. This was due to be reduced by the government to £95k.

Councillor Hubbard queried whether the Council had the option to reduce the £95k further or whether the Council had to abide by Government guidance. The Executive member advised that this could be looked at and consulted on in respect of the following years' Pay Policy statement.

Councillor Bell stated that he agreed with the criteria for staff pay increases as set out in paragraph 12 of the statement. Councillor Bell referred to paragraph 10 of the statement and stated that it was unacceptable for Senior officers to have their pay increased without any scrutiny. Councillor Bell proposed that any pay increases to the Senior Management Team should be agreed by full Council prior to the pay increase being implemented.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance advised that all Chief Officer salaries were set regionally. The posts were evaluated by a trained panel and were subsequently ratified externally.

Councillor Bell stated that he still wished to propose that any pay increases to the Senior Management Team should be agreed by full Council prior to the pay increase being implemented.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that Councillor Bell was proposing a motion to amend the Pay Policy Statement. According to the rules on amendments to motions, detailed at paragraph 69 of the Constitution, the amendment proposed by Councillor Bell was not valid. Chief Officer's pay was set at a local and regional level and the Council did not have the necessary powers to make a decision on this issue.

Councillor Rathmell stated that the Pay Policy statement currently referenced severance payments to officers and it stated that any severance payment under £100k did not need to be submitted to full Council for consideration. Councillor Rathmell referred to a recent severance payment which amounted to over £90k and he proposed that the report be referred back to the Executive Member for reconsideration.

The Monitoring Officer clarified with regard to which points of the report that Councillor Rathmell wished to refer the report back. Councillor Rathmell stated that he wished to refer the report back for the Executive Member to reconsider the threshold of £100k, with a view to lowering that figure, for full Council or a committee thereof to be given an opportunity to vote before severance package is approved.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the motion proposed was valid and advised that a seconder would be required before the motion could be considered. Councillor Bell seconded the motion.

Following a vote, the motion was declared **CARRIED**.

ORDERED that the Pay Policy statement report be referred back for the Executive Member to reconsider the threshold of £100k in relation to severance payments, with a view to lowering that figure, for full Council or a committee thereof to be given an opportunity to vote before a severance package is approved.

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

Consideration was given to Motion No.143, moved by Councillor M Storey and seconded by Councillor Higgins of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

COVID-19 Motion

'Middlesbrough Council recognises and praises the exceptional work of all council employees, social care workers, NHS staff and all key workers in retail and other sectors for working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to do so. These workers risked their lives by going to work every day and keeping vital public services and retail during the Covid-19 outbreak. This Council also recognises the hundreds of people across Middlesbrough who volunteered their time to check on friends and neighbours, pack food parcels and deliver them.

This Council therefore resolves:

To place on record its' thanks to all those keyworkers and volunteers who have worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

To place on record its' thanks to all Middlesbrough Council employees who have continued to work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and provide a service to people of Middlesbrough.'

Councillor McTigue advised that given the content of the motion, it was likely that every member would support the motion and she proposed that Council proceed straight to the vote.

Councillors Wright spoke in support of the motion and outlined some examples of the good work carried out throughout the Covid-19 pandemic within his Ward and other areas.

Councillor Mawston spoke in support of the motion and advised that the Middlesbrough Independent Group fully supported the motion.

The Chair invited Councillor M Storey to speak in support of the motion.

Councillor M Storey outlined the reasons for the motion and spoke in support of the motion. Councillor Storey provided examples of the many different areas of society that had continued

to provide support during the pandemic. He stated that he wished to place on record, his gratitude to all of those people involved in providing invaluable services during Covid-19.

Councillor Higgins spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was put to the vote.

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

Consideration was given to Motion No.144, moved by Councillor Branson and seconded by Councillor Wright of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

COVID-19 - Council finances

'Middlesbrough Council recognises the strain the pandemic has placed on Council finances. Whilst we recognise that the government has reimbursed some of the direct costs of Covid-19, we do not believe it goes far enough. Middlesbrough Council has been unable to make the required savings in its 2020/21 budget and has seen a sharp decline in its income due to the closure of facilities and the suspension of parking fees to name but a few. The government told councils at the start of this crisis that that 'The government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts.' However, since then it has been confirmed that the government will not reimburse unachieved savings and will reimburse up to 75% of income lost. This will put a further pressure on future budgets This Council believes this is wrong and the Government should fulfil its pledge to do 'whatever is necessary'.

This Council therefore resolves:

To robustly call upon the government to properly reimburse councils for the loss of income due to Covid-19 and cost of unachieved savings for 2020/21.

To continue to pressure local MP's to make the case in parliament and to the government.

To write to local Members of Parliament with a copy of this motion if passed.'

Councillors Mawston advised that some time ago, the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee had written to local Members of Parliament asking for their support in asking for additional funding for this Council. At a recent Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee, it was agreed that a further letter be sent, and Councillor Mawston had advised Simon Clarke, MP, that this letter would be forthcoming. Councillor Mawston advised that Councillor Rathmell, as Chair of Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee may be able to provide an update on this issue.

Councillor M Storey spoke in support of the motion. Councillor Storey advised that the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee had written to local MPs and Andy McDonald, MP had written to Simon Clarke MP and who was also the Local Government Minister calling for more funding for Middlesbrough. Councillor Storey advised that he would provide the Chair of that committee, with a copy of the letter. Councillor Storey stated that the government had promised to provide local authorities with everything they needed, however the local authorities had only received 75% of the indirect costs, which meant that there were gaps because the government had not funded local authorities appropriately. He stated that it was important that the Council did not see a reduction in services because of a lack of government funding. He urged all members to support the motion.

Councillor Rathmell proposed an amendment to the Motion. Councillor Rathmell suggested that the words 'and the suspension of parking fees to name but a few' be deleted. Most people were on lockdown and the only people that would have benefitted from these services was keyworkers and the NHS staff.

This was seconded by Councillor Hubbard.

The Monitoring Officer clarified which words Councillor Rathmell wanted to be removed. The Monitoring Officer advised that this was a valid amendment.

Councillor Garvey stated that when a body of members write to an MP, if any members of the Council had any influence over the MPs, that they urge them to respond to the communication.

Councillor Cooke suggested a further amendment so that the wording of 'and the suspension of parking fees to name but a few' be changed to 'and the suspension of some chargeable Council services'.

Councillor Rathmell indicated that he agreed to the amendment.

The amended motion was agreed as follows:

COVID-19 - Council finances

'Middlesbrough Council recognises the strain the pandemic has placed on Council finances. Whilst we recognise that the government has reimbursed some of the direct costs of Covid-19, we do not believe it goes far enough. Middlesbrough Council has been unable to make the required savings in its 2020/21 budget and has seen a sharp decline in its income due to the closure of facilities and the suspension of some chargeable Council services. The government told councils at the start of this crisis that that 'The government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts.' However, since then it has been confirmed that the government will not reimburse unachieved savings and will reimburse up to 75% of income lost. This will put a further pressure on future budgets This Council believes this is wrong and the Government should fulfil its pledge to do 'whatever is necessary'.

This Council therefore resolves:

To robustly call upon the government to properly reimburse councils for the loss of income due to Covid-19 and cost of unachieved savings for 2020/21.

To continue to pressure local MP's to make the case in parliament and to the government.

To write to local Members of Parliament with a copy of this motion if passed.'

Councillor Walker spoke in support of the motion. He stated that many local authorities had an increase in responsibilities and a decrease in funding and with Covid this added additional pressure. He queried whether a letter would be effective. He stated that many members of the public might query whether if there was a decrease in services, if it would mean a reduction in Council tax. He stated that the responsibilities for Middlesbrough had increased but funding from the government decreased.

Councillor Higgins stated that the Council was not asking for special treatment, it was only asking for what it was promised. Councillor Higgins urged members to support the motion.

Councillor Branson spoke in support of the motion. He advised that the Council had already been required to transfer funding from the contingency reserve fund to the general fund to deal with the projected overspend of £4.4m for this year. The Council had been able to save some money on Capital expenditure and by not purchasing new vehicles. The General reserve fund would need to be replenished at a cost of £3.7m. The Director of Finance had indicated that further savings of over £3m, may need to be found in the next financial year.

The effect of Covid on the Council's finances in terms of reduced Council tax income and business rate income as a result of the contracting economy and the fact that the government would only fund 75% of revenue receipts.

There would be significant pressure on local finances in the following year and the Council could be faced with raising the Council tax or cutting services and this would affect the most vulnerable in the town.

Councillor Branson suggested that if agreed, a copy of the motion be forwarded to the Government.

Following clarification from the Monitoring Officer with regard to the proposed amendment to the motion, the amended motion was put to the vote.

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

12 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

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

13 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

The Chair announced that there were five questions from Members of the Council. The details of the specific questions were included at Agenda Item 16.

Question 1/20 - Councillor M Storey to the Mayor with regard to the closure and re-opening of parks.

In response to Question 1/20 the Mayor advised that the coronavirus was dangerous and it was killing people, and decisive strong action needed to be taken. He stated that he believed that the decision to temporarily close the parks was the right one but he had kept it under review. The Mayor advised that he had held discussions with various people including the Director of Environment and prior to re-opening the parks, arrangements had been made to tape off all of the play areas in the parks. The Mayor advised that he had received criticism for closing the parks and criticism for re-opening the parks from some members of the council and local activists. The Mayor urged members to try and be more positive and to work together for the good of the town.

Question 2/20 - Councillor Furness to Councillor Waters regarding Selective Landlord Licensing

In response to Question 2/20, Councillor Waters advised that the Selective Landlord Licensing scheme was currently operating in half of the Newport Ward. Any decision regarding the expansion of the scheme would be made once an evaluation of how the scheme was operating sometime in the future.

The Executive Member advised that the Selective Landlord Licensing scheme based in the North Ormesby Ward was operating well. The scheme had not been enforced in the past very well but changes to the scheme had improved the way the scheme operated.

The Chair requested that Councillor Hellaoui put all her three questions together to allow the Executive Member for Education and Skills to respond.

Question 3/20 4/20 5/20 - Councillor Hellaoui to Councillor Smiles regarding Education

In response to the above questions, Councillor Smiles stated that the Council should pay testament to the young people of the town in the way in which they had handled the situation with regard to the situation with regard to examinations. The Government were not publishing any performance data at this time. Councillor Smiles advised that from early indications from schools, it appeared that in Middlesbrough, the grades awarded were mainly in line with teacher assessments, with some upgrades. These grades could improve further, following the appeals process. Councillor Smiles advised that she was keen to monitor the situation and support the educational settings, where necessary.

The Executive Member advised that in terms of the situation regarding the schools being closed, it appeared that children in the transitional point of their education had been affected more than most other children, as they were unable to engage in their new educational

settings. It was important to monitor this situation. There was a virtual dialogue with the most vulnerable children and additional support was on offer in terms of mental health, which could become an issue in the forthcoming months. There was also a catch up programme for early years for those children moving into reception.

The Executive Member highlighted a campaign called 'Your Future Matters' to promote opportunities for post 16 year olds to access education, skills or training.

Councillor Hellaoui queried whether members could be kept updated on the above issues. The Executive Member confirmed that members would receive updates.

14 **TIMETABLE FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/2021**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services submitted a report outlining the programme of full Council committee meeting dates for the Municipal Year 2020/2021 as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

15 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services submitted a report containing details of decisions that had been taken under the urgency rules.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

16 **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services advised that following a recommendation from the Chief Officer Appointments Committee held on 26 August 2020, to appoint Ian Wright to the post of Director of Finance, Council was requested to ratify the appointment to the post, which carried with it responsibility for the statutory Chief Finance Officer role.

Following a vote, it was:

ORDERED that the appointment of Ian Wright as Director of Finance and statutory Chief Finance Officer be approved.