

MEETING OF MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of Middlesbrough Council, lawfully convened, and held on 16 December 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors J Hobson (Chair), R Arundale, A Bell, C Cooke, B Cooper, D P Coupe, D Davison, C Dodds, T Furness, J Goodchild, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, A High, S Hill, C Hobson, B A Hubbard, N Hussain, D Jones, 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 Saunders, M L Smiles, M Storey, J Thompson, Z Uddin, J A Walker, S Walker, A Waters and G Wilson

OFFICERS: C Benjamin, S Blood, S Bonner, C Breheny, B Carr, G Field, R Horniman, A Hoy, A Humble, S Lightwing, C Lunn, T Parkinson, A Perriman, S Reynolds, T Whitehead, K Whitmore, A M Wilson, I Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Councillor D J Branson, Councillor S Dean, Councillor L Garvey, Councillor L Lewis, Councillor P Storey, Councillor C Wright.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

1 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 25 NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 November 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

There were no formal Announcements for this meeting.

3 REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Council received and noted a report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board outlining the work of the Board and Scrutiny Panels.

4 REFRESHING THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE 2021-24 PERIOD

The Mayor and the Chief Executive submitted a report with regard to refreshing the Strategic Plan for the 2021-24 period.

The report commenced the process of refreshing the Strategic Plan for the 2021-2024 period, ensuring that it remained current and reflective of major developments of the past year, in particular COVID-19, and those anticipated in the coming three years.

The Mayor advised that the Council would consult with local communities and other stakeholders on the proposed revisions to strategic priorities.

This consultation would take the form of the first 'annual conversation' with communities on direction of travel and future plans (including spending plans), an approach which will in future years be embedded within the Council's emerging locality working approach. The consultation would be called 'Let's Talk' and the Mayor urged the public to take part in the consultation process.

ORDERED as follows:

That Council note the proposed strategic priorities for 2021-24 (Appendix 1) for public consultation to inform the next iteration of the Strategic Plan, to be considered by Council on 24 February 2021.

5 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE, AND BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS

2021/22

The Mayor and the Director of Finance submitted a report with regard to the Medium Term Financial Plan Update, and Budget Savings Proposals 2021/22.

The report provided an update to Council of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period to 2023/24, reflecting and supporting delivery of the Strategic Plan.

The Mayor advised that he had a number of amendments to make to the report that had been previously circulated.

The Mayor referred to Paragraph 15 of the report which included a number of planned budget savings for 2021/22 which were proposed as part of the budget report to Council in February 2020 and were already assumed in the MTFP

The Mayor advised that since this report was considered by Executive the Government had announced the details of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 and this had now clarified a number of assumptions and it was clear that the amount of money the Council was going to receive from the Government in 2021/22 was greater than had been forecast. As a result of officers already finding a way of saving the Council £1.9m in efficiencies which do not impact on the public of Middlesbrough the Council has some room for manoeuvre on the setting of its 2021/22 Budget. As a result, the proposal to move to fortnightly bin collections included at Paragraph 15 of the report, would be removed from the proposed budget savings as this could now be funded from the additional money identified above.

In addition, the proposed increase in Council Tax included at Paragraph 29 of the report would be 2.75% rather 3.99%.

The Mayor advised that the executive were not convinced that Middlesbrough was ready for fortnightly collections as fly-tipping in some parts of town could get worse. He stated that the Council would focus on educating people to recycle by working with the public, schools and the university to promote recycling.

Councillor M Storey stated that he believed most people would be happy to hear that fortnightly bin collections was no longer an option. However, he asked what had changed, where the Council would find the money and how recycling education would be increased.

The Mayor advised that the Council now had certainty over the amount of money it was receiving from the Government and following an examination of different departmental budgets, weekly bin collections would be retained for the time being.

The Mayor advised that initiatives had been planned in schools to promote recycling - with advice notices on bins to advise what could or couldn't be recycled as well as residents being offered a second recycling bin.

Councillor Mawston advised that the retention of weekly bin collections was excellent news for all residents. He stated that two of the political groups that were in favour of weekly bin collections had submitted a call-in in respect of the previous decision to go to two weekly bin collections. He stated that the Council needed an excellent recycling programme and they needed to involve schools in the programme.

Councillor Cooper advised that he would email his question to the Mayor, as he was having technical issues.

Councillor J Walker thanked the Executive for changing their mind and taking on board the comments from residents with regard to fortnightly bin collections.

Councillor McTigue queried with regard to what happened to litter that had been picked up and whether it was recycled. She also thanked the Mayor for agreeing to go on a walkabout of the Ward. The Mayor advised that litter picked up as part of a litter pick was not recycled as far as he was aware.

Councillor Higgins stated that she agreed with the idea of visiting schools to educate about recycling.

Councillor Coupe congratulated the Executive on the way they had managed the budget. He stated that he agreed with the idea of educating children in schools about recycling.

Councillor Saunders stated that he was pleased that the decision to go to fortnightly bin collections was to be reversed. He queried whether any future decision regarding fortnightly bin collections could be deferred until the next election.

The Mayor advised that it would depend on whether recycling rates improved, the carbon footprint was reduced and funding was available.

ORDERED as follows:

1. That the Council note the updated Medium Term Financial Plan position for 2020-24.
2. That the Council note that the proposal to move to fortnightly bin collections included at Paragraph 15 of the report, would be removed from the budget savings as the savings that would have been achieved if the proposal had been implemented, would be funded from the additional funding identified by officers.
3. That the Council note the proposed additional budget efficiency savings for 2021/22 detailed in Appendix 1 which are considered to have minimal or no effect on front line service delivery levels, and notes that the revised proposed budget and Council Tax increase of 2.75% for 2021/22 would be subject to public consultation commencing on 17 December 2020 and ending on 31 January 2021.

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

Consideration was given to Motion No.146, moved by Councillor C Hobson and seconded by Councillor Arundale of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

Fireworks Motion

This Council resolves:

to encourage all organised public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.

to reasonably promote a public awareness campaign via the council's social media channels about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people - including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.

to write to the Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

The Chair invited members to speak to the motion.

Councillor C Hobson spoke in support of the motion and outlined the reasons why she had proposed the motion. Councillor Hobson advised that fireworks that exceeded 150 decibels could cause loss of hearing to people and animals. Dogs and cats suffered from severe distress and in some areas, fireworks were going off for over a month. Animals were severely affected which resulted in them refusing to go out.

Councillor Cooper advised that he supported the motion but he would like to propose an amendment to include that the Government regulate the size of the fireworks.

The Chair advised that the motion had been reviewed by the Council's legal department and parts of the original motion that had been put forward had been taken out because the Council would have been unable to enforce those elements of the motion.

Councillor Hubbard seconded the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Mawston advised that he supported the motion but he would like to add an amendment that the Government reduce the power of the fireworks.

Councillor McTigue advised that she supported the motion, in particular the reduction in decibels.

Councillor Coupe advised that he supported the motion and agreed that fireworks needed more regulation.

Councillor Rooney referred to a report produced in 2019 which recommended that there should be restrictions on fireworks and that decibels should be set and that local government should be able to enforce the measures. Councillor Rooney advised that she would forward the report to Councillor Hobson for information.

Councillor Rathmell stated that he would like to propose an amendment to the motion to say that the Council would develop its own fireworks policy for any event that the Council held.

The Monitoring Officer queried that as there were three different amendments, whether the three members that had proposed them would like to combine them into a single amendment to enable members to vote on it.

All three members agreed to the combined amendment.

The Chair read out the revised motion.

This Council resolves:

to encourage all organised public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.

to reasonably promote a public awareness campaign via the council's social media channels about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people - including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.

to write to the Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the size, the power and the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

That the Council develop its' own Fireworks policy for any events held by the Council.

Councillor Arundale spoke in support of the motion and outlined the reasons why he was seconding the motion.

The amended motion was put to the vote.

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

The amended motion became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the vote.

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

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

There were no Urgent items submitted for this meeting.

8 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

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