

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 8th March, 2006.

Present: Mrs J L Apedaile, Mr P Baker, Mrs J Beaumont, Mr D T Brown, Mr D Cains, Mrs P A Cains, Mr M Cherrett, Mr D Coleman, Mr B Cook, Mr C Coombs, Mr A Cunningham, Mr I J Dalgarno, Mr K Dewison, Mr K Dixon, Mr K Faulks, Mr J A Fletcher, Mrs S Fletcher, Mr M Frankland, Mr R Gibson, Mr D Harrington, Miss B Inman, Mrs E Johnson, Mr B Jones, Mr P Kirton, Mr T Laing, Mr A Larkin, Mr C Leckonby, Mr K Leonard, Mr K Lupton, Mr J M Lynch, Mr L Narroway, Mrs K F Nelson, Mr S Nelson, Mrs E A Nesbitt, Mr W Noble, Mrs A Norton, Mrs J O'Donnell, Mr S W D Parry, Mr R Patterson, Mr M Perry, Mrs M Rigg, Mr R Rix, Mrs J M Roberts, Mrs B Robinson, Mr F G Salt, Mr A B L Sherris, Mr M Smith, Mr M Stoker, Mr N Teasdale, Mrs A Trainer, Mrs J Wade, Mr S F Walmsley, Mrs M B Womphrey, Mr M E Womphrey, Mr B Woodhead, Mr B Woodhouse

Officers: G Garlick, J Haworth (CE); T Beckwith (CESC); N Schneider (DNS); D E Bond, S McDonald (LD); V Rutland (PP); J Danks (R)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dalgarno, Dewison, Mrs Norton, Parry, Mrs Womphrey and Womphrey.

1090 Minutes

1091 Declarations of Interest

Minute No(s) Interest
Councillor Walmsley
Cleveland Fire Authority
Planning Committee

Personal/Non Prejudicial – Member of

Councillor Coombs 958 Personal/Non Prejudicial – Wrote in favour of this application as Ward Councillor

Housing Review (Introductory Tenancy) Panel

Councillor Mrs Trainer 988 Personal/Non Prejudicial – Member of Tristar Board

Cabinet

Councillor Coombs 1024 Personal/Non Prejudicial – Member of Neighbourhood Management Board

Housing & Community Safety Select

Councillor Brown 1039, 1041 Personal/Non Prejudicial – Member of Tristar Board and son works for Tristar Homes Ltd

Councillor Mrs Trainer 975 Personal/Non Prejudicial – Member of Tristar Board

Standards Committee

Councillor Lynch 1050 Personal/Prejudicial – Member of Thornaby Town Council/Witness at the hearing

Councillor Rix 1050 Personal/Prejudicial – Was a representative at the

Adjudication Panel Hearing
Councillor Robinson 1050 Personal/Prejudicial – Member of Thornaby Town Council/subject of the Hearing

Agenda Item No 8 Outside Bodies

Councillor Larkin Personal/Non Prejudicial – An employee of Police Service

1092 Public Question Time

The Director of Law and Democracy informed the Worshipful the Mayor that no public questions had been received.

1093 Members' Question Time

The following question was submitted by Councillor Walmsley: -

‘With a report just coming out highlighting pensioner poverty and that the gap between rich and poor has grown alarmingly under the Labour Government and that inflation busting rises in council tax, stealth taxes and power bills is adding to financial hardship, can we now assume that it is local policy to exclude those living in dire straights from any benefits simply because statistically they live in affluent wards – as supported by The Labour Group in a registered vote at Special Council on 1st March 2006?’

The Leader of the Council responded with the following:

‘I don’t know of any report about to be released on pensioner poverty and so I and my colleagues await it with interest. There is no denying that our own Council precept set at 4.5% is above inflation, the circumstances that led to this level of Council Tax were explained in the report I gave to the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1st March. There were no amendments tabled to the revenue budget and it was given All Member support.

Stealth taxes, taxation by stealth - I don’t understand this part of the question in the context of poverty, dire straits and financial hardship. The Government’s taxation policies are designed to help those who suffered disproportionately from the ravages of poverty.

The basic state pension in April 2006 will be £82.05 for singles and £131.20 for couples, from the same date the poorest of pensioners will be guaranteed £109.45 for singles and £167.05 for couples through the new Pension Credit Scheme.

§ To date, the Labour Government has lifted over half a million children out of relative poverty and over two million out of absolute poverty.

§ Compared to 1997, families with children are on average £1,350 a year better off in real terms as a result of Labour’s tax and benefit reforms; the poorest households with children are £3,000 a year better off.

§ New mothers have gained 26 weeks paid maternity leave, fathers 2

weeks.

§ Six million families are benefiting from the new tax credits – the Child Tax Credit and the Working Tax Credit boosting the incomes of 2.3 million families.

§ Locally there is Warm Zone, Decent Standards, Sure Start

§ 1.6 million people are better off thanks to the national minimum wage.

§ Winter fuel payments of £200

I could go on and on and on. The recent hike in gas/electric/water bill is an absolute disgrace and will serve only to further line the pockets of greedy executives and their City of London friends, billions of pounds siphoned off into the pockets of fat cat spivs. There is an answer of course, bring back what was stolen from us by the Tories back into public ownership, without compensation.

The Liberal Democrat amendment to which your question refers had nothing at all to do with hardship, exclusion on dire straits, it was not about raising living standards of poor people, it was an attempt to hijack £200K of capital for spending on work outside of those areas in receipt of NRF funding, areas where it is recognised by all of us that is still real need. The amendment was defeated. I would like to thank those non-Labour Councillors who voted with the Labour Group, yourself included Councillor Walmsley for helping to defeat it'.

1094 Response to the Consultation Document on New Primary Care Trust Arrangements in Co Durham and the Tees Valley.

Members considered a report which brought for approval the response to the Consultation Document on New Primary Care Trust Arrangements in Co Durham and the Tees Valley which had been considered by meetings of the Health Select Committee on 13th and 22nd February 2006 (Minute numbers 1035-1037 and 1042-1043 refer).

A response to the consultation was required by 22nd March 2006 and the Health Select Committee had reviewed the evidence supporting the two options given which were as follows: -

Option 1

- one new PCT for County Durham and Darlington
- one new PCT for Teesside

Option 2 –

- one new County Durham PCT (merging existing ones)
- five PCTs covering Darlington, Harlepool, Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland based on the boundaries of the Unitary Local Authorities

The Health Select Committee concluded that Option 2 provided a Primary Care Trust fit for purpose for the following principal reasons: -

- it retained the essential coterminous model
- it supported the effective partnership arrangements across Stockton on Tees

- it allowed the development of shared health and well being priorities
- there was no real evidence to support many of the assertions within the document that supported Option 1
- the savings could be found in a number of ways and, in any event, North Tees PCT should not be expected to find the share allocated.

RESOLVED that Option 2 within the Consultation Document which retains a coterminous Primary Care Trust with Stockton on Tees Borough Council be supported.

1095 Licensing Sub Committee

Moved by Councillor Mrs Nelson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wade and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee (Minute Nos 923-932, 933-936, 937-944 and 1010-1016) be received.

1096 Licensing Committee-Minutes

Moved by Councillor Mrs Nelson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wade and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee (Minute Nos 945-951) be confirmed.

1097 Planning

Moved by Councillor Cains, seconded by Councillor Cherrett and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee (Minute Nos 952-966 and 989-1006) be confirmed or received as appropriate subject to the following corrections: -

Page 898 – Minute Number 954 Planning Committee 11th January 2006

Insert the following paragraphs after the second paragraph on page 898: -

“The Committee resolved that the public and press would be excluded from the following section of the meeting in order to allow members to receive legal advice under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Upon receiving legal advice the Members and Officers returned and the meeting continued in public session”

Page 934 – Minute Number 1004 – Planning Committee 1st February 2006

In the third paragraph on page 934 change Eaglescliffe Parish Action Group to Eaglescliffe Preservation Action Group.

1098 Housing and Community Safety Select Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Mrs Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Mrs Trainer and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee (Minute Nos 967-975 and 1038-1041) be confirmed subject to the following correction: -

Page 914 – Housing and Community Safety Select Committee 12th January 2006

Delete Councillor Woodhead from the attendance list and insert Councillor Walmsley.

1099 Environment and Regeneration Select Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Mrs Beaumont, seconded by Councillor Teasdale and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Select Committee (Minute Nos 976-977) be confirmed.

1100 Corporate Policy Select Committee Minute

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Larkin and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Policy Review Select Committee (Minute Nos 978-980) be confirmed.

1101 Performance Review and Audit Select Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Lupton and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance Review and Audit Select Committee (Minute Nos 981-984) be confirmed.

1102 Housing Review (Introductory Tenancy) Panel Minutes

Moved by Councillor Mrs Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Leonard and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Review (Introductory Tenancy) Panel (Minute Nos 985-988) be received.

1103 Executive Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Noble and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee (Minute Nos 1007-1009) be received subject to the following correction: -

In the attendance list on page 936 delete Councillor Womphrey and insert Councillor Woodhead.

1104 Appointment Panel

Moved by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointment Panels (Minute Nos

1017-1019 and 1044-1046) be received.

1105 Cabinet Minutes

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Coleman and RESOLVED that the minutes of Cabinet (Minute Nos 1020-1034) be received or confirmed as appropriate.

1106 Health Select Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Dixon, seconded by Councillor Lupton and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health Select Committee (Minute Nos 1035-1037 and 1042-1043) be confirmed.

1107 Standards Committee Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sherris, seconded by Councillor Fletcher and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee (Minute Nos 1047-1053) be received or confirmed as appropriate.

(Councillors Lynch, Rix and Robinson had declared a personal & prejudicial interest in minute number 1050 and left the room for the duration of the above item).

1108 Safer Stockton Partnership Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Safer Stockton Partnership held on 6th December 2005 were noted.

1109 Cleveland Police Authority Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cleveland Police Authority held on 6th December 2005 were noted.

1110 Elderly Citizens' Liaison Forum

The minutes of the Elderly Citizen Liaison Forum held on 24th January 2006 were noted.

1111 Forward Plan and Leader's Report

The Forward Plan for the period 1st March 2006 to 30th June 2006 had previously been circulated to Members. The Forward Plan for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st July 2006 would be published on the 17th March 2006.

The Leader of the Council reported on significant decisions which the Cabinet had taken since the last Council Meeting and which the Cabinet was proposing to take over the coming months.

1112 Supporting Fairtrade

The following motion under the Council Procedure Rule 12.1 was moved by Councillor Gibson and seconded by Councillor Mrs Rigg:-

‘Stockton Borough Council welcomes the Fairtrade campaign supported by national organisations such as Oxfam and Christian Aid and locally by the Youth Assembly and the Joint Trade Union Council and recognises the contribution that Fairtrade can make to the long term alleviation of world poverty.

The Council as an important consumer and opinion leader therefore resolves:

- To promote awareness of Fairtrade issues and make publicity and educational information available to local people concerning the impact of unfair trade and the opportunities that Fairtrade provides to promote sustainable development.
- To encourage the use of Fairtrade products when catering for Council meetings and functions.
- To promote Fairtrade amongst local businesses, commercial and other organisations.
- To allocate the responsibility for meeting the criteria to become a Fairtrade Borough to the Fairtrade steering group.’

The motion was carried.

1113 Suspension of Council Procedure Rules

In accordance with Council Rule 22.1, it was moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Coleman and RESOLVED that Council Rules of Procedures be suspended for the remainder of the meeting, to allow an urgent motion to be considered.

1114 Review of Police Structures

The following motion under the suspension of Council Procedure Rules was moved by Councillor Coombs and seconded by Councillor Kirton:

‘Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has grave concerns about the current review of police structures in that the Tees Valley City Region proposals, as supported by this Council, other local authorities, MPs and local communities has been rejected by the Home Secretary, who appears to be moving towards a regional force merging Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria.

We are concerned at apparent proposals to base the regional force in Northumbria, some 60 miles away and at the risk posed to the jobs of over 800 support staff who live and work in the Tees Valley area.

We note that in opinion polls and surveys, around 80% of residents have consistently rejected a regional force, and this has been backed up by over 70 local consultation meetings held by the Police Authority.

We have concerns that £125 million has been committed nationally towards reorganisations costs, but that costs have been estimated by the Association of Chief Police Officers as £836 million.

We note that a new Police Authority for the whole region is being proposed which will have only 12 Council members for the regions 23 police Council Tax precepting authorities. There are also concerns that magistrate expertise, and that of independent members has been reduced to a regional total of 11.

We have serious concerns that, for new structures, the Home Secretary now has reserve powers to appoint both Chairs and members of police authorities and Chief Constables.

We note recent progress made in Cleveland in tackling serious and organised crime, and in long-standing highly recognised emergency planning arrangements and we note the recent comments of the Police Authority Chief executive that he could not recommend a regional structure, as currently proposed, as meeting the authority's responsibility to secure efficient and effective policing in Cleveland.

The Council resolves to support the position of the Police Authority in opposing the regional structure as proposed.

The motion was carried.