

# Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 22nd March, 2006.

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

**Officers:**

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:**

## 1115 Declarations of Interest

Planning Committee

Councillor Walmsley declared a personal/prejudicial interest in Minute No 1064 as his wife was employed by the applicant.

Cabinet

Councillor Mrs Nelson declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in Minute No, 1073 as she served on the Board of the Forge Community Resource Centre. She also declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in minute number 1071 as her son attended one of the schools referred to.

Councillor Mrs Nesbitt declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in Minute No. 1073 as she was the former Executive Officer of the Forge Community Resource Centre.

All Members present at the meeting were deemed to have a Personal/Non Prejudicial Interest in respect of Minute Number 1086 – Members Allowances as a result of their entitlement to claim and receive such allowances.

## 1116 Honorary Alderman

Council considered a nomination for former Councillor J. H. Cooke to be appointed to the position of Honary Alderman in accordance with Section 249 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was explained that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 a principal Council could, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of Members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose, confer the title of Honorary Alderman on persons who had, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past Members, but who were not at that time Members of the Council

The Act indicated that service with predecessor Authorities would count as service to be taken into account when conferring the honour.

Stockton on Tees Borough Council, at their meeting on 29th March 2000 accepted the recommendations of the Civic sub-Committee that reckonable service with relevant Councils should be at least 20 years, or 15 years including holding a senior office over a long period. In this context it had also been the practice not to count service with the former Cleveland County Council where that service was contemporaneous with service with Stockton on Tees Borough Council or its predecessor authorities.

Members were informed of former Councillor Cooke's known service and noted that it satisfied the necessary criteria.

Name	Known Service	Identified Total
Cllr J. H Cooke 31	Stockton on Tees BC  1974 – 1991 including Chair of Policy & Resources & Former Leader of the Council  Teesside County Borough 1971-1974  Former Stockton District Council 1957-1968	

Councillor Gibson proposed that the Council confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Cooke and this was seconded by Councillor Stoker.

A vote was taken and the proposal was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED that

1. the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on former Councillor J.H. Cooke

2. former Councillor Cooke, and his Guest, be invited to attend the Annual Meeting of Council, on 5th April 2006, to participate in a ceremony during which the title will be conferred.

## 1117 Planning Minutes

Moved by Councillor Cains, seconded by Councillor Cherrett and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee (Minute Nos 1057 - 1068) be

confirmed or received as appropriate.

## **1118 Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Coleman and RESOLVED that the Minutes of Cabinet (Minute Nos 1069 - 1089) be received or confirmed as appropriate subject to the following correction to Minute Number 1071 – Mr G. Pickup to be added to the appointment made to the Board of Governors for Blakeston School.

The following proposed amendment to the recommendations contained in Minute Number 1086 were submitted by Councillor Gibson and seconded by Councillor Coleman as follows:

RECOMMENDED that

1. the Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowance for 2006/07 be set at a maximum of £8.50 per hour with a maximum monthly payment, to a claimant, of £400
2. an inflationary rate of 2.5% be applied to the Basic, Special Responsibility and Co optees Allowances for 2007/08, to be reviewed annually thereafter.

The amendments were approved.

## **1119 Council Plan**

Further to Cabinet held on 9th March 2006 consideration was given to the content of the proposed Council Plan 2006-2009. A presentation was provided to Members which included an Introduction to the Planning Process and Council Plan

It was explained that the Council Plan set out how the Council would contribute to community objectives. The plan was based on the objectives and outcomes already set in the Community Strategy and Service Plans, but provided focus on the key objectives the Council needed to achieve authority wide, and which needed to be monitored by Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet.

The principle underlying the development of the Council Plan was that it should be a business plan for the organisation, focusing on key corporate priorities for change, rather than summarising all activities that the Council undertook. This approach was vital to ensure a clear focus on improvement, but meant that some significant service areas did not feature in the key objectives and outcomes. The focus of the plan shifted each year as key improvement priorities altered over time; it was a three year rolling plan which was updated on an annual basis.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the Authority during Winter 2005 rated the council as 4 star and improving well. It endorsed the Council's overall direction of travel. This year's plan was therefore based around the same set of core objectives as were used in 2005. Within the plan the improvements, which linked specifically to the CPA inspection, were highlighted.

The Council Plan had been developed as the negotiations for the second year of the borough's pilot Local Area Agreement (LAA) had been ongoing; links to the LAA had been highlighted within the Plan.

The Plan had been developed in partnership with all Services and in consultation with elected members. The development process included:

- a. Consultation with elected Members through the MTFP and Council Plan seminar and drop in clinics in February;
- b. Consultation with Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and Policy Officers throughout the drafting process;
- c. Consideration of the results of the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Stockton
- d. Consultation with the Viewpoint Panel on priorities

As an 'Excellent' Council Stockton had the freedom to use its Council Plan to meet the statutory requirement to prepare a (Best Value) Performance Plan. The Council Plan therefore formed the Council's Performance Plan for 2006/7. It would be supplemented by an annex of best value performance indicator information and targets to be published at the end of June.

In its guidance on performance plans, the ODPM specified the intended audiences of those documents:

- a. The primary audience should be the authority itself including elected members and officers
- b. The Government was a secondary audience, because the plans contained essential information enabling it to monitor performance
- c. Although Performance Plans had to be available to the public, the public were not intended to be the primary audience.

This was in line with Stockton's approach and full copies of the plan would be provided to members, managers and key partners and the Government. A summary version of the Council Plan would also be prepared for all staff. The Council Plan would also be made available in public places and copies would be provided to the public when requested: full and summary versions would also be available over the Internet.

RESOLVED that Council Plan for 2006 -2009 be approved.

## **1120 Service Improvement Plans 2006 - 2009**

Further to Cabinet held on 9th March 2006, consideration was given to the draft Service Improvement Plans for 2006-2009.

Members were reminded that the service planning framework was reviewed in 2005 and a revised framework put into place to focus on changes and

improvements and to bring service and resource (finance, human resources, ICT, procurement) planning closer together. Service Improvement Plans (SIPs) had been developed to cover the responsibilities of each head of service, though not necessarily on a one head of service one service plan basis. SIPs include the key changes, improvements and priorities which would require significant attention from heads of service to deliver. Core business in each service would be covered in business unit plans which sat beneath the SIPs.

The service improvement plans supported the Council Plan and Community Strategy. Plans were structured to include

- a. introduction outlining the strategic direction of the service and key achievements from the previous year;
- b. action plans linked to the five themes of the Community Strategy and a theme of organisational development. The action plans included links to other plans, identify actions and milestones, responsible officers, success measures and targets, and risks. In addition where actions would have resource implications those were identified.
- c. The medium term financial plan for the service
- d. A performance indicator table including both measures and targets.

Plans had been developed to cover all service areas. In some areas it had been sensible to develop combined SIPs covering more than one head of service's remit e.g. finance and children. The planning service had developed a performance improvement plan rather than a SIP, reflecting the improvement priority of that area.

Performance against SIPs would be monitored and reported to Members twice a year, alongside Council Plan monitoring.

Appended to the report were abridged versions of the draft SIPs, focusing on key elements of the action plans. Full draft SIPs had been placed on the Intranet to enable Members to consider them in detail. Once agreed, plans would be published on cd-rom and on the intranet with a set of hard copy plans lodged in the members' library.

Members were provided with presentations from the following service groupings on the content of their Performance Improvement Plans 2006/2009 which represented a summary of their more detailed service delivery plans:-

Children, Education and Social Care  
Development and Neighbourhood Services  
Resources  
Law and Democracy  
Policy Performance and Communications

Members were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions on each of the above presentations.

RESOLVED that the Council Service Plans 2006/2009 be approved.

