

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 8th September, 2010.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Colin Leckonby); Cllr Hilary Aggio, Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Phillip Broughton, Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Mrs Eileen Craggs, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Maurice Frankland, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Fred Salt, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey, Cllr Mick Womphrey, Cllr Bill Woodhead and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: N Schneider (CE); D E Bond, P K Bell,(LD); P Dobson (DNS); J Danks, L King, A Kelly (R); J Humphreys (CESC).

Also in attendance: Members of the Public, M Marshall and A Porter (Public Questioners).

Apologies: Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Liz Nesbitt and Cllr Michael Smith.

C Councillor Allison Trainer

109/10

Members stood in a minutes silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Allison Trainer.

C Declarations of Interest

110/10

Councillors Beall, Mrs Cains, Fletcher, Harrington, Lupton, Nelson, Mrs Nelson, Rix and Walmsley all declared a personal non prejudicial interests in respect of agenda item 11 - Cabinet Minutes - CAB 53/10 as they were or close family members were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

C Minutes

111/10

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 14th July 2010 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C Public Question Time

112/10

The following question was submitted by Michelle Marshall for response by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety:-

"I asked a question on 21st January 2010 on behalf of Mrs Porter, the question listed the sub-standard conditions I and others have to live in, from that Tristar carried out a survey, my neighbour at 5 Baffin Court kitchen was not replaced, when the whole estate had theirs renewed 10 years ago, my very old twisted wiring is over 40 years old, following the survey only my kitchen and living room was replaced, why is it that my old twisted wiring was not renewed when other Tristar Tenants had all theirs renewed, my concern is that my three children who keep there coats on during the winter months in the bedroom, should there an electrical fire due to the wiring my children's lives will be at risk.

The question I ask is why do a survey of the properties then only give a token

response?"

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety responded with:-

"In response to your question about rewiring at your property I have checked our records and your property was inspected by our heating and ventilation section on 23.11.07 when some minor repairs were carried out. At this time the wiring was found to be in reasonable condition throughout and it was recommended that the wiring be further inspected and tested within 5 years. I have however asked that an updated inspection is carried out at your property in the immediate future to check the current condition of your wiring and of course put your mind at rest. The inspector will contact you directly to arrange suitable access."

Michelle Marshall asked the following supplementary question:-

"Councillor Nelson I had Tristar call at my home since submitted, surveying the old twisted wiring, the outcome was only 3 properties had their whole rewiring carried out, this confirms for our estate Tristar only carry out piecemeal improvements.

Over the years I have lived in my Tristar property, I can honestly say Tristar have only improved the living conditions i.e. Decent Standard for me and my neighbours in a piecemeal fashion. It has been hit and miss with new cupboards, new bathrooms, some can have and some can not.

The paint over job that was done just before the ombudsman came to inspect. We are still dealing with ice inside the windows and during the day wringing out cloths that catch the water on the window sills. One neighbour has yellow glue appearing from the paint due to the mastic covering the rotten wood.

To finally sum up Tristar management have fitted new kitchens in the Mandale redevelopment just before Christmas sending a letter stating the property will be demolished. What a waste of money.

Will you do no more surveys, rather you treat us with respect and put matters right for us to have a home fit to live in? And please can I have your response in writing?"

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety responded with:-

"Yes I will send you a written copy of my response. I am not on the Tristar Board and Tristar Board members will be able to answer that question better than me but the necessary funds were not available to carry out the works and I'm going to pre-empt the supplementary from the next question and give a further response then."

The following question was submitted by Alice Porter for response by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety:-

"I am here today to ask the question, I was in hospital with double pneumonia

when my question was asked on 21st January 2009.

Councillor Nelson you stated on 21st January 2009 "There is no money available to do the works and there are the same issues across the Borough, and some are in a worse state". The 51 Tristar properties from Manning Way to Grenville Road are in desperate need for double glazed windows, no Tristar properties in the Borough could be worse than ours. Ice builds up inside our windows, this country had the coldest winter for a very long time and our properties could not retain the heat. 184 units in the high rise flats in Thornaby are having the third set of double glazed windows, the second set only 15 years ago.

How do you justify that?"

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Safety responded with:-

"When you raised the question on investment in January 2009 I provided a detailed response to the issues raised. I explained that due to limited capital resources and the need to fund emerging health and safety works we weren't able to fund all of the additional investment such as window replacement that both we and tenants badly wanted. As a consequence we carried out an option appraisal to look at our investment needs over the coming years and how best we could fund them reaching the conclusion that stock transfer was the only way to get the resources we needed. Tenants were then balloted on the issue and voted an overwhelming yes to stock transfer which we are currently working towards.

Once Tristar becomes a registered social landlord they will have freedoms and flexibilities to borrow money which unfortunately the Council doesn't have and so will have additional resources to invest in the stock as was pointed out in the offer document sent to all tenants prior to the ballot. Since the ballot Tristar have been developing future investment plans and recognising the issues raised by yourself I am pleased to inform you that the remaining windows on the Greenwood Estate windows will be replaced in 2011. Tristar are currently working on the detail of the programme and of course arranging for contractors etc to carry out the work. Tenants will be advised of actual dates for replacement nearer the time. With reference to window replacement at the high rise in Thornaby this are being carried out on health and safety grounds as the window seals were failing posing a risk to public safety."

Alice Porter asked the following supplementary question:-

"Councillor Nelson no matter how you have tried to justify finding the huge sums of money for the 184 units of double glazed windows;

The bare facts are you have blatantly left the 51 Tristar properties in our area; living in a sub zero conditions.

Just before the Ombudsman came to investigate our complaint of the desperate need for double glazed windows Tristar had the rotten wood frames camouflaged with mastic; painted white. When the Ombudsman came to inspect the windows in the summer time, all looked in good order.

The winter of 2009 was bitterly cold, and lasted a very long time. Tristar sent their top manager to inspect the build up of ice inside my windows, and informed me that it was condensation, and I should keep the windows open. The temperature was 5 degrees below freezing. The whole of the bedroom would be covered with Frost if I had followed his advice.

Tristar informed us that our windows would be renewed in; 2005-8-10-and now 2013, this is unacceptable; you found money you did not have for the high rise flats, find the money from the same place to renew our windows."

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Safety responded with:-

"I trust I have just answered that question although I would add that I am not on Tristar Board but Councillor Large is and you could ask her for further information."

C
113/10 **Appeals & Complaints Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Sherris and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appeals & Complaints Committee held on 16th July 2010 (Minute ACC 1/10 - ACC 4/10) be received.

C
114/10 **Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs McCoy, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) held on 30th June 2010 (Minute APP 1/10 - APP 4/10) be received.

C
115/10 **Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) held on 16th August 2010 (Minute APP 5/10 - APP 8/10) be received.

C
116/10 **Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs McCoy, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointments Panel (Heads of Service) held on 17th August 2010 (Minute APP 9/10 - APP 12/10) be received.

C
117/10 **Audit Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhouse, seconded by Councillor Womphrey and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 29th June 2010 (Minute A 19/10 - A 23/10) be received.

**C
118/10** **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 5th August 2010 (Minute CAB 44/10 - CAB 55/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate subject to the following correction:-

At minute CAB 44/10 (Page 183):-

Add "non prejudicial" after the word "personal" to all of the Declarations of Interest.

**C
119/10** **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 2nd September 2010 (Minute CAB 56/10 - 65/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

With regard CAB 63/10 - New Executive Arrangements Cabinet had recommended to Council that it consider recommendations contained within the report.

Following considerable debate and then in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 Councillor Gibson requested that a recorded vote be taken, which was supported by at least a quarter of the Members present, who signified their support by standing.

For the recommendations at minute CAB 63/10:-

Councillors Baker, Beall, Mrs Beaumont, Broughton, Mrs Cains, Cains, Cherrett, Cockerill, Cook, Dixon, Earl, Fletcher, Frankland, Gardner, Gibson, Harrington, Javed, Kirton, Laing, Lewis, Lupton, Mrs McCoy, Mrs Nelson, Nelson, Noble, Mrs O'Donnell, Patterson, Perry, Mrs Rigg, Rix, Salt, Sherris, Stoker, Mrs Womphrey, Womphrey, Woodhead and Woodhouse.

Against the recommendations at CAB 63/10:-

Councillors Aggio, Apedaile, Mrs Craggs, Dalgarno, Eddy, Leckonby, Walmsley, Mrs Walmsley.

Abstentions:-

Councillors Faulks and Kirby.

The recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Cabinet held on 2nd September 2010 (Minutes CAB 56/10 - CAB 65/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

C **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**
120/10

Moved by Councillor Harrington, seconded by Councillor Eddy and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 19th May 2010 (Minute CYP 6/10 - CYP 11/10) be confirmed subject to the following correction:-

Add "Cllr Aidan Cockerill (Vice Councillor Sherris)" to the list of Members present.

C **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**
121/10

Moved by Councillor Stoker, seconded by Councillor Apedaile and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee held on 15th June 2010 (Minute CAS 7/10 - CAS 9/10) be confirmed.

C **Employee Appeals Panel Minutes**
122/10

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Employee Appeals Panel held on 29th April 2010 (Minute EAP 1/10 - EAP 3/10) be received.

C **Employee Appeals Panel Minutes**
123/10

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Employee Appeals Panel held on 10th May 2010 (Minute EAP 4/10 - EAP 6/10) be received.

C **Environment Select Committee Minutes**
124/10

Moved by Councillor Mrs Rigg, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 17th May 2010 (Minute ENV 1/10 - ENV 6/10) be confirmed.

C **Environment Select Committee Minutes**
125/10

Moved by Councillor Mrs Rigg, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 28th June 2010 (Minute ENV 7/10 - ENV 12/10) be confirmed subject to the following correction:-

At minute ENV 10/10 under the heading "Animal Welfare and Dog Fouling" delete the first paragraph and insert:-

"Members were advised that consultation with dog owners at Preston Park was being undertaken on the introduction of Dog Control Orders."

C
126/10 **Health Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs Cains, seconded by Councillor Faulks and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health Select Committee held on 24th May 2010 (Minute H 9/10 - H 14/10) be confirmed.

C
127/10 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Earl and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 22nd April 2010 (Minute HCS 1/10 - HCS 8/10) be confirmed.

C
128/10 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Earl and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 1st July 2010 (Minute HCS 9/10 - HCS 14/10) be confirmed.

C
129/10 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Earl and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 12th July 2010 (Minute HCS 15/10 - HCS 17/10) be confirmed.

C
130/10 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 26th June 2010 (Minute L 16/10 - L 22/10) be received subject to the following correction:-

Add "Cllr Aggio (vice Councillor Leckonby)" to the list of Members present.

C
131/10 **Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 1st July 2010 (Minute LSC 19/10 - LSC 21/10) be received.

C
132/10 **Planning Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 23rd June 2010 (Minute P 24/10 - P 28/10) be received.

C
133/10 **Planning Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 14th July 2010 (Minute P 29/10 - P 39/10) be received.

C
134/10 **Planning Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 4th August 2010 (Minute P 40/10 - P 47/10) be received subject to the following correction:-

Add "Cllr Cockerill and Cllr John Fletcher (vice Councillor Mrs Rigg)" to the list of Members present.

C
135/10 **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 21st June 2010 (Minute RTS 16/10 - RTS 20/10) be confirmed.

C
136/10 **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 5th July 2010 (Minute RTS 21/10 - RTS 25/10) be confirmed.

C
137/10 **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 19th

July 2010 (Minute RTS 26/10 - RTS 27/10) be confirmed.

C
138/10 **Standards Committee Minutes**

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 17th June 2010 (Minute S 23/10 - S 29/10) be received subject to the following correction:-

Add "Cllr John Fletcher" to the list of apologies for absence.

C
139/10 **Standards Committee Minutes**

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 16th July 2010 (Minute S 30/10 - S 40/10) be received subject to the following correction:-

Add "Cllr John Fletcher" to the list of apologies for absence.

C
140/10 **Building Schools for the Future Project Board Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Building Schools for the Future Project Board held on the 28th June 2010 were noted.

C
141/10 **Cleveland Fire Authority Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cleveland Fire Authority held on the 4th June 2010 were noted.

C
142/10 **Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 17th March 2010 were noted.

C
143/10 **Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 11th May 2010 were noted.

C
144/10 **Local Joint Consultative Panel Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Consultative Panel held on the 21st June 2010 were noted.

C
145/10 **Markets Forum Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Markets Forum held on the 14th April 2010 were noted subject to the following correction:-

Minute M 5/10, Page 2:-

Remove the words "and the remaining" 2nd paragraph, end of the first sentence.

C
146/10 **Markets Forum Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Markets Forum held on the 26th May 2010 were noted.

C
147/10 **Markets Forum Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Markets Forum held on the 28th July 2010 were noted.

C
148/10 **Amendment to the Membership of the Tristar Board and Tristar Shadow Board for the Municipal Year 2010/11**

The Council had been informed that Councillor Mrs Nesbitt had resigned from the Tristar Board and Tristar Shadow Board. In accordance with political proportionality, the vacancies should be filled by the Labour Group.

Following consultation with the political group leaders the following nomination had been received for both vacancies:-.

Councillor Rix

RESOLVED that Councillor Rix be appointed to the Tristar Board and the Tristar Shadow Board.

C
149/10 **Motion to Council**

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1. Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Kirton:-

"COUNCIL NOTES.... That the increase in VAT from 17.5% to 20% announced in the governments june budget speech will fall hardest on those least able to afford it..... that the increase in VAT will lead to higher prices for goods and services Will have a disproportionate impact on pensioners and all other low income groups and will have a severe impact on small and medium enterprises, charities and community groups within the borough of Stockton on tees.... the greater burden falling on those least able to pay with no proposed increases in pensions and other allowances to compensate. This runs contrary to the government statement of the 20th of May 2010 which promised to ... "ensure that fairness was at the heart of those decisions so that those most in need would be protected"... Council also notes that the institute of fiscal studies has

stated that the VAT increase was not unavoidable as the chancellor stated in his budget.

COUNCIL RESOLVES to write directly to the chancellor of the exchequer raising our concerns about the impact of the increase on pensioners and other vulnerable groups and also the impact on business and commerce throughout the borough of Stockton on Tees.

Council calls upon the Members of Parliament for Stockton North and Stockton South to stand up for the communities they represent by voicing their opposition to the proposal and voting against it in Parliament."

Councillor Mrs Rigg moved and Councillor Fletcher seconded the following amendment to the motion:-

Delete all text after the word "budget" in the motion. Add the following:-

"and which is now part of the Finance Act 2010/11, will have an effect on all members of the community in the Borough of Stockton on Tees.

- The previous Labour Government has burdened this country with the largest budget deficit of any economy in Europe apart from Ireland, with public sector net borrowing expected to be £149 billion this year.

- The former Chief Secretary to the Treasury has acknowledged that there is no money left in a letter for his successor.

This Council therefore believes that the increase in VAT is regrettable but necessary for the new Government to address the perilous economy they have inherited."

Following considerable debate and then in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 Councillor Gibson requested that a recorded vote be taken, which was supported by at least a quarter of the Members present, who signified their support by standing.

For the amendment to the motion:-

Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Broughton, Cherrett, Cockerill, Earl, Fletcher, Gardner, Laing, Lewis, Lupton, Perry, Mrs Rigg, Salt, Sherris, Mrs Womphrey, Womphrey and Woodhead.

Against the amendment to the motion:-

Councillors Apedaile, Baker, Beall, Mrs Cains, Cains, Cook, Mrs Craggs, Dalgarno, Dixon, Eddy, Faulks, Frankland, Gibson, Harrington, Javed, Kirton, Leckonby, Mrs McCoy, Mrs Nelson, Nelson, Noble, O'Donnell, Rix, Stoker, Walmsley, Mrs Walmsley and Woodhouse.

Abstentions:-

Councillor Aggio, Kirby and Patterson.

The amendment to the motion was declared lost.

Then in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 Councillor Gibson requested that a recorded vote be taken on the substantive motion, which was supported by at least a quarter of the Members present, who signified their support by standing.

For the substantive motion:-

Councillors Apedaile, Baker, Beall, Mrs Cains, Cains, Cook, Mrs Craggs, Dalgarno, Dixon, Eddy, Faulks, Frankland, Gibson, Harrington, Javed, Kirton, Leckonby, Mrs McCoy, Mrs Nelson, Nelson, Noble, O'Donnell, Rix, Stoker, Walmsley, Mrs Walmsley and Woodhouse.

Against the substantive motion:-

Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Broughton, Cherrett, Cockerill, Earl, Fletcher, Gardner, Laing, Lewis, Lupton, Perry, Mrs Rigg, Salt, Sherris, Mrs Womphrey, Womphrey and Woodhead.

Abstentions:-

Councillor Aggio, Kirby and Patterson.

The substantive motion was carried.

C 150/10 **Members' Question Time**

The following questions were submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the Leader of the Council:-

1. How many times has the Local Government Ombudsman found Stockton Borough Council guilty of maladministration and why have Members not been told of any such criticisms?
2. In recent dealings with the Local Government Ombudsman Stockton Borough Council was criticised for a lack of written policy/procedures regarding the disposal of premises and land. S B C agreed to remedy this situation. Can you please confirm that this has been done and that we do have an open, written policy?
3. There seems to be many similarities between the sale of the former Saltergill School site and sale of Thornaby Town Hall. Can I assume that the sale of the latter was in line with the "lessons learned for the future", mentioned by the Local Government Ombudsman?
4. Does Stockton Borough Council own the title deeds to Thornaby Town Hall and, if so, can I see them please?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"1. In the last 3 years there have been no Ombudsman reports which have

found the Council guilty of maladministration.

In all cases of maladministration, if any are received, they will be reported publicly to Cabinet and Cabinet decisions and recommendations would then be submitted to Council for consideration.

2. Officers have agreed to provide written procedures on the disposal of surplus land, once these are finalised they will go through the formal approval procedures and will be publicised on the Council's website.

3. The Local Government Ombudsman's comments in this report are not relevant to the sale of Thornaby Town Hall. The sale of Thornaby Town Hall followed a formal tender process, extensive consultation and a detailed scrutiny meeting, whereas the sale of the school site was on the basis of an informal tender process and was not subject to the same procedure. Accordingly there are no similarities between the two processes.

4. Yes the title deeds are in the Council's ownership and arrangements for inspection can be made by contacting the Head of Legal Services.

Councillor Eddy asked the following supplementary questions:-

"1. Thank you Councillor Lupton. Will you please confirm that S B C has not been criticised by the Local Ombudsman for maladministration within the last three years? It seems strange that you stipulated 3 years as a little over 3 years ago S B C had to make a public apology to a Thornaby Councillor following comments from the Local Ombudsman. It is also very strange that I have here in my hand a letter from the Local Ombudsman dated 26 July of this year commenting on the maladministration by S B C in its dealings with the disposal of public property and land. Specific criticism about the lack of a written policy or guide lines. S B C stated that this would be rectified. Has this been done? Do we now have a written policy and public clarity?

2. No Supplementary.

3. I am sorry Councillor Lupton but I completely disagree with you. There are many similarities including a lack of public notification and a total failure to inform unsuccessful bidders. In the case of Saltergill School I believe an offer of a million pounds plus the costs to demolish was turned down in favour of a much smaller offer which has still not come to fruition. This means the rate payers of the Borough of Stockton lost out on one million pounds and have had to pay over £700k in security costs. Is this a sensible use of rate payer's money?

4. No supplementary.

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

1. SBC was criticised and officers have agreed to provide written procedures on the disposal of surplus land.

2. No supplementary.

3. I can only say again that there aren't any similarities but if you wish to discuss this further please come in to see me in my office."

4. No Supplementary.

The following question was submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People:-

"1. As I understand it there is a policy regarding grants for secondary school aged pupils uniforms. This obviously takes into account parent's ability to pay. In the light of this can you please tell me if it is true that children attending two of our secondary schools have all been given a full set of school uniforms free of charge and if so who pays?"

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People responded with:-

If parents have a child or children in years 7-11 attending secondary school and those children qualify for free school meals they will be able to apply for a clothing grant of £30. They can apply for one for each child in each academic year. To qualify parents need to be in receipt of one of the following:-

- Income support
- Income based jobseeker's allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit, in specific circumstances
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Guarantee part of Pension Credit

Each of the Academies, North Shore and Thornaby, have new uniforms and have agreed to fund, for every child, some of the items. They have provided blazer, waterproof coat, tie, T shirt and a pair of shorts for PE. Parents have to provide the rest of the uniform and can apply for uniform grant if they are eligible.

Bringing 2 schools together, 2 cultures and 2 groups of young people is always a challenge.

The important thing is to give those young people the ambition, confidence and belief that they can succeed.

Creating pride in their school and inspiring them to learn and achieve is an important part of their future.

We can see the wonderful improvements that have been. Achieved in Thornaby, and I hope you are, as I am, very proud of that.

I was at the North Shore Academy on Monday and the school was buzzing with excitement. That is what we wanted from the Building Schools for the Future Programme for school across the Borough.

We have seen year on year improvements from our schools and I want that to continue so all our young people have a bright and prosperous future.

That is my hope and vision and I hope it is yours.

I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating children and their schools on their improved performance in examinations this year. At KS4 52.7% students achieved 5+ A *-C (including English and Maths), an increase of 4% over 2009 and a best ever performance. 75.1 % of students achieved 5+ A *-C (level 2) which is an increase of 7% over 2009.

One school, Thornaby Community School, improved its performance at 5 A *-C by 53% with its level 2 outcome raising from 43.8% in 2009 to 96.8% this year.

At KS2 the combined English and Maths result was the best ever at 79.9% which is 4.4% higher than last year. These figures only relate to the schools that entered for SATs."

Councillor Eddy asked the following supplementary question:-

"Thank you Councillor Mrs McCoy. All I wanted to know was if two favoured schools were given special treatment and you have said these two schools did receive free uniform items. Is this morally justifiable and why wasn't I given a response to my question?"

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People responded with:-

"I did respond. Not all items have been provided free by the two schools, just some, and the rest of the items would have to be paid for by the parents unless they were entitled to a clothing grant of £30. They can apply for one for each child in each academic year."

C 151/10 Forward Plan and Leaders Statement

The Leader of the Council gave his Forward Plan and Leaders Statement

- Schools success

The Leader of the Council added his congratulations to all the pupils, teachers, governors and staff involved in achieving the Borough's best ever GCSE results.

- Enterprising Britain

Stockton's work in schools to encourage "enterprising attitudes" among pupils and the wider community has also been recognized with the Borough recently named the "Most Enterprising Place in the North East".

Part of a national search to find locations that put support for new business and enterprise at the heart of their economic development activities – Stockton was chosen out of the whole of the region.

- Local Enterprise Partnerships

And the accolade certainly puts the Council in strong position as it joins with our

fellow Tees Valley authorities and the local business community in submitting a proposal to form a Local Enterprise Partnership for the Tees Valley.

Monday marked the deadline for submissions across the country to form these new economic development partnerships – with TVU making the bid on behalf of the sub-region.

At the heart of the Tees Valley LEP proposal were plans to sustain and grow the process sector and support the move to low-carbon industries to create new businesses and jobs.

As well as putting forward the bid to create a LEP, the bid by ANEC and the NBF to create a strategic economic body at the regional level had been supported. This North East Economic Partnership would have functions separate, but complementary to, the LEPs. The other authorities in the NE were submitting bids for four LEP's, Gateshead with Newcastle, Northumberland with North Tyneside, Sunderland with South Tyneside and Durham on it's own. It was expected the Government would announce those areas that had been successful in their bids by the end of the month.

Crucially, this milestone illustrated the foresight the area had in creating TVU three years ago – without which the Tees Valley wouldn't be in such a strong position in the bid to become a Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Leader of the Council also wanted to make Members aware of a number of reports that would be coming out over the course of the week and next that were very relevant to this debate and in making the case for a LEP in the Tees Valley.

The first was a report by the Audit Commission – potentially the last one it would produce – on jobs and skills provision in the Tees Valley. The Commission inspected all 5 authorities as part of this report which would be published shortly.

While the report showed the scale and pace needed to increase the number of new businesses and jobs in the Tees Valley, it did recognise the progress that was being made. In particular, it acknowledged the way the councils and other partners came together to respond to the recession and mitigate its impact.

There were concerns with the way the report was conducted and the scope of the research, but a fairly positive outcome was expected for Stockton in particular about the prospects for improvement.

The results of a BBC Experian survey would reveal that parts of the North East were the most vulnerable to economic shocks such as business failures and job losses – with Teesside high in the rankings of areas that were least resilient.

Again, further evidence that a step-change in the area's approach to economic development was needed.

- Other investment news

Last month saw confirmation of the first phase of 50 new homes to start at

NorthShore which was a real vote of confidence from the HCA and developers Muse in the Stockton site which it was hoped would act as a magnet for future investment in the area.

Also last month came the regrettable news that Armstrong Flooring at Teesside Industrial Estate was to close with the loss of 160 jobs. There was work with partners at Job Centre Plus to ensure all support possible would be given to the affected workers.

However, more positive was the news from Corus who had signed a MOU with Thai-based SSI which could mean a return to steel-making at the Redcar site. Further updates were awaited but this initial signing certainly pointed to promising progress.

- Summer events

Since last Council the borough had also enjoyed another successful summer of events with more than 100,000 visitors coming to SIRF, over 415 taking part in the Borough's triathlon and over 750 hardy-souls taking part in the first Rat Race as part of the Take to the Tees festival.

Special recognition went to the Mayor for being among those to take part in the Rat Race and it was understood the upper age limit was "flexed" in order for Councillor Leckonby to take part. Many congratulations to him and all the other athletes who also raised many thousands of pounds for charity.

- Looking ahead

Future investment in the Borough's schools post - BSF would be the subject of a special report going to Cabinet in October and then on 20th October – which would be the next Council - more would be learned of the Government's spending plans in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Also in October there would be the outcome of the Council's Adult Services Inspection and more immediate is OFSTED's inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services.

The Freedom of the Borough given to The Rifles would take place on 9th September 2010 and it was hoped that as many local residents would turn-out to mark the occasion and show their support.

- And finally the imminent results would be announced soon for two competitions that Stockton Borough Council was in the running for:-

The first – Entente Florale – was Europe's biggest environmental competition and recognizes towns, cities and boroughs that demonstrate a real commitment to the environment that they maintain for local residents.

And the second was the APSE – Public Sector National Awards – where Stockton was one of only ten councils in the country to be short listed for the "council of the year" award.

Only those councils who had been short listed in four or more other categories could go forward to compete for APSE's overall prize with Stockton shortlisted in the front-line service categories of waste and recycling, transport and fleet service; parks, grounds and horticultural services and Care for Your Area.

The results would be announced shortly but Members congratulated all those involved in getting this far in this prestigious competition.