

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 24th November, 2010.

Present: The Worship 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 David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Miss Tina Large, 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 Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Fred Salt, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Mick Stoker, 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); P Sellers (CESC).

Also in attendance: Mr F W Hayes (Chairman of the Standards Committee), Members of the Public, Mrs M Simpson.

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Eileen Craggs, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Maurice Frankland, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Ross Patterson and Cllr Stephen Walmsley.

C Declarations of Interest

198/10

Councillors Cherrett, Gibson, Miss Large, Rix and Woodhead all declared personal prejudicial interests in respect of agenda item 10 - Cabinet Minutes (CAB 95/10) as they were all members of the Tristar Homes Board. During consideration of the item all of the above Councillors withdrew from the meeting and left the room.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Cabinet Minutes (CAB 87/10) as he was a member of St Ann's Development Board.

C Minutes

199/10

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th October 2010 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C Geoff Lee

200/10

Council sent best wishes to Geoff Lee for a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

C Public Question Time

201/10

The following question was submitted by Marjorie Simpson for response by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport:-

"I along with many residents of Yarm and Eaglescliffe were astounded that the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan has been disbanded and that it is intended to integrate this into the LDF for the whole area. After five years involvement by local volunteers who have worked equally as hard as officers of the council there was no consultation with these volunteers or the residents of both areas who had supported this most important document which we felt

would help to protect our area from legal vandalised development.

Whilst I am aware of present budget constrains I cannot understand the waste of resources both paid and unpaid that is caused by the total abandonment of this, special to our area, document. Our representatives tell us that the inclusion in the LDF will strengthen our development aspirations but residents of our area beg to differ.

Why was the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan abandoned without consultation with residents or Town and Parish Councils?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"The purpose of the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Area Action Plan (YEAAP) was to: "address the key pressures/development opportunities within Yarm and Eaglescliffe".

When the draft report was presented to the LDF Steering Group on 17 May 2010, it was obvious that a number of policies that were emerging were not unique to Yarm and Eaglescliffe and extended beyond the YEAPP boundaries. These included conservation areas, character areas, retail hierarchy, residential and employment allocations and would therefore have to be duplicated in other policy documents.

It was therefore considered that the document had limited scope with few deliverable outcomes and that time and money could be saved and faster progress made by incorporating policies for Yarm and Eaglescliffe into other documents.

None of the work that was undertaken for the YEAAP will be lost. It will be used to inform the relevant policies in the Regeneration and Environment DPDs.

When members agreed to the proposal to incorporate the YEAAP into the emerging Regeneration and Environment Development Planning Documents, they requested that letters be sent to everyone invited to the meeting in January 2010 advising of the decision. In fact, letters were sent to everyone on the Spatial Planning consultation database and to those that had attended meetings regarding the YEAAP.

This recommendation was agreed by Planning Committee on 23 June, Cabinet on 5 Aug and endorsed by full Council on 8 Sept 2010."

Marjorie Simpson asked the following supplementary question:-

"What assurances would the Cabinet Member be able to give to the people of the Yarm and Eaglescliffe areas that the emerging Regeneration and Environment Development Planning Documents will help their area?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"The issues in Yarm and Eaglescliffe are not unique and are coming up in other areas of the Borough. As the YEAAP will now be incorporated into the emerging Regeneration and Environment Development Planning Documents it will ensure

that the documents fit together and that there is consensus for all the areas in the Borough."

C
202/10 **Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Sherris and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee held on 30th June 2010 (Minute ALC 8/10 - ALC 12/10) be confirmed.

C
203/10 **Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Sherris and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee held on 21st July 2010 (Minute ALC 13/10 - ALC 17/10) be confirmed.

C
204/10 **Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Sherris and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee held on 18th October 2010 (Minute ALC 18/10 - ALC 21/10) be confirmed.

C
205/10 **Audit Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhouse, seconded by Councillor Womphrey and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 27th September 2010 (Minute A 31/10 - A 36/10) be received.

C
206/10 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 28th October 2010 (Minute CAB 82/10 - CAB 93/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

C
207/10 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 18th November 2010 (Minute CAB 94/10 - CAB 95/10) be confirmed.

C
208/10 **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Harrington, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 29th September 2010 (Minute CYP 31/10 - CYP 35/10) be confirmed.

C
209/10 **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Harrington, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 6th October 2010 (Minute CYP 36/10 - CYP 39/10) be confirmed.

C
210/10 **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Stoker, seconded by Councillor Apedaile and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee held on 14th September 2010 (Minute CAS 16/10 - CAS 20/10) be confirmed.

C
211/10 **Environment Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs Rigg, seconded by Councillor Smith and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 4th October 2010 (Minute ENV 19/09 - ENV 25/09) be confirmed.

C
212/10 **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 21st September 2010 (Minute H 22/10 - H 30/10) be confirmed.

C
213/10 **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 18th October 2010 (Minute H 31/10 - H 38/10) be confirmed.

C
214/10 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 4th October 2010 (Minute HCS 23/10 - HCS 26/10) be confirmed.

C **Licensing Committee Minutes**
215/10

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 31st August 2010 (Minute L 42/10 - L 47/10) be received.

C **Licensing Committee Minutes**
216/10

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 21st September 2010 (Minute L 48/10 - L 54/10) be received.

C **Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**
217/10

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 14th September 2010 (Minute LSC 28/10 - LSC 30/10) be received.

C **Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**
218/10

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 20th September 2010 (Minute LSC 31/10 - LSC 33/10) be received.

C **Planning Committee Minutes**
219/10

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6th October 2010 (Minute P 60/09 - P 66/09) be received.

C **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**
220/10

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 27th September 2010 (Minute RTS 40/10 - RTS 46/10) be confirmed.

C **Standards Committee Minutes**
221/10

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 12th August 2010 (Minute S 41/10 - S 49/10) be received.

C
222/10 **Standards Committee Minutes**

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 8th October 2010 (Minute S 50/10 - S 63/10) be received.

C
223/10 **Local Joint Consultative Panel Minutes**

The minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Panel held on the 13th September 2010 were noted.

C
224/10 **Markets Forum Minutes**

The minutes of the Markets Forum held on the 22nd September 2010 were noted.

C
225/10 **Schools Capital Projects Board Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the Schools Capital Projects Board held on 6th September 2010 were noted.

C
226/10 **Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel**

The minutes of the Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel Minutes held on 28th September 2010 were noted.

C
227/10 **Amendment to Membership**

At its Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 7th April 2010 the Council approved appointments to its Committees, Panels and Joint/Outside Bodies for the Municipal year 2010/2011. Subsequently a vacancy existed on the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee. In accordance with political proportionality, the vacancy should be filled by the Labour Group.

Following consultation with the political group leaders the following nomination had been received:-

Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee

Nomination - Councillor Dick Cains

RESOLVED that Councillor Cains be appointed to the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee.

C
228/10

Motion to Council

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

This Council condemns the savagery of the proposed cuts to housing and council tax benefits. When added to the cuts in working tax credits, child benefits, the £6 billion of cuts in the emergency budget and the 28% cuts to local government spending, we can see that a massive financial burden is being imposed on the working poor, the unemployed and the infirm, young and old alike.

Meanwhile the bankers who crashed the economy have grown richer and the super rich avoid taxation to the tune of £120 billion.

We see the gap between the rich and the poor widening and an unequal society becoming more unequal.

The Labour Group on Stockton Borough Council calls upon all elected Members of this Council to join us in absolute condemnation of the Coalition Government's fiscal policies. We collectively instruct the Chief Executive to write immediately to the Prime Minister expressing our dismay at the Government's continuous attacks on those least able to defend themselves.

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 motion:-

Councillors Apedaile, Baker, Beall, Mrs Cains, Cains, Coleman, Cook, Faulks, Gibson, Harrington, Miss Inman, Javed, Kirton, Miss Large, Mrs McCoy, Mrs Nelson, Nelson, Noble, Mrs O'Donnell, Rix, Smith, Stoker, Mrs Walmsley and Woodhouse.

Against the amendment to the motion:-

Councillors Aggio, Mrs Beaumont, Broughton, Cherrett, Cockerill, Dalgarno, Fletcher, Mrs Fletcher, Laing, Leckonby, Lewis, Lupton, Perry, Mrs Rigg, Salt, Sherris, Mrs Womphrey, Womphrey and Woodhead.

Abstention:-

Councillor Dixon.

The motion was carried.

C
229/10

Motion to Council

Council agreed that Procedure Rule 12.1 be suspended for the purposes of the proposed motion.

The following motion was then moved by Councillor Lupton and seconded by Councillor Mrs Rigg:-

"That this Council notes with concern the impact of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement on the Spending Review, on the 20th October 2010, on deprived communities in Stockton Borough and the rest of the North East of England. In particular we are concerned by the withdrawal of targeted funding such as the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which has been hugely important in supporting initiatives in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Stockton Borough.

We call on the Government to recognise the unfairness of its approach to funding reductions over the next four years when compared with other regions and to reconsider its decision to end the Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

The Council further calls on the Government to review its approach to the front loading of savings into the first years of the Spending Review and spread the impact over the four years of the period of the Review.

The motion was carried.

C 230/10 **Members' Question Time**

The following questions had been submitted by Councillor Mrs Fletcher for response by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance:-

- "1. What steps have been taken to inform all members of staff that care should be taken when sending out e-mails with large attachments, without warning, to multiple addresses?
2. In view of the number of very large attachments (11 MB each) received by members recently, what steps are going to be taken to remind staff?
3. What training has been given to staff across the council in ensuring that attachments to emails are reduced to a minimum size?
4. What checks are in place to ensure that there is adequate access to the necessary software to do this?"

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance responded with:-

"Thank you for your question Councillor Mrs Fletcher I always welcome Members feedback. If it is ok with Councillor Mrs Fletcher I will send an email to all Members of the Council with a number of actions that Officers are taking on the issues?"

Councillor Mrs Fletcher responded with:-

"Yes that is fine."

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Walmsley for response by the Cabinet for Regeneration & Transport and was presented by Councillor Mrs Walmsley:-

"An incredible article appeared in the latest Stockton News suggesting that works on the Mandale bus corridor had been completed two weeks early which

will improve safety and make bus services more reliable. Bearing in mind that this scheme has already led to a spate of accidents – the last one a multi casualty pile up – can the Cabinet Member inform Members when the safety and reliability aspects of this scheme will actually kick in?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"As with any scheme of this size and nature there will be a period of adjustment as drivers become familiar with the new road layout. The signing advising drivers of the changes did meet the Department for Transport requirements and it is unfortunate that the recent collision involving the car pulling out in front of the oncoming bus resulted in some injuries. As a result, we have taken steps to install further signage, over and above the amount recommended by the DfT.

The primary intention of this scheme is to reduce journey times for buses, which is already providing reductions in their journeys between Middlesbrough and Stockton, thereby increasing the reliability of services. In addition, there are other benefits including improved routes for cyclists, for which we have received positive feedback, and safety improvements.

These safety improvements included the upgrading of pedestrian crossings in the area making it safer for pedestrians. The scheme also reduced traffic travelling eastbound on Mandale Road as it is now down to one lane. This should lead to reduced vehicle speeds and a reduction in the number of crashes, for which there has been a recorded problem for some time.

With regard to improvements to bus reliability and reducing journey times, Robin Knight, Stagecoach's Commercial Director has told Council Officers that their services are already seeing significant journey time improvements, saving valuable time off the sixteen buses each hour they run along the route."

Councillor Mrs Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"This council has been warned repeatedly about the folly of this scheme for so little advantage and yet true to form ignored local councillors, Thornaby Town Council, and local businesses. In fact the absurdity of the scheme and pandering to bus companies was brought up at last council and typically answered with the usual waffle. Therefore, wouldn't it now be appropriate to apologise to those parties who submitted asked for views only to be ignored and, more importantly, display some remorse to those who have been injured as a consequence of political and corporate incompetence?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"I can not remember any Ward Councillor concerns at the start of the scheme. Any new road layout takes a while to bed in while the users become familiar with the new layout. The scheme will benefit bus users and reduce journey times. Although I was sorry to hear of the recent accident, car crashes can happen on any road."

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Walmsley for response by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport and was

presented by Councillor Mrs Walmsley:-

"The Mandale bus corridor element of the £60m Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement has cost a staggering £600,000 for no discernable improvement to bus schedules. Almost one third of that amount has been used to demolish ugly planters from outside of Thornaby Town Hall and construct a top of the range paved area complete with seating. How does this improve road safety and bus reliability?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"As with all schemes undertaken by the Council, we attempt to co-ordinate different schemes, where possible, as this increases efficiencies and reduces disruption for the public. For this particular scheme, we took the opportunity to include essential road maintenance work, waterproofing of Victoria Bridge and the introduction of public realm improvements outside Thornaby Town Hall to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum.

It is not the case that £200K was spent on removing planters, but there was significant investment in the area around the Town Hall and Station. Some of the monies spent in this area, included road surfacing and bus waiting facilities. The station and Town Hall area is a key destination point for commuting to or through the area and has been outlined as a key site within the forthcoming Regeneration Development Plan Document (DPD). Part of this strategy highlights opportunities to enhance the street frontage on Mandale Road, improving the setting of the listed town hall building and the area as a gateway into Thornaby as you approach from the West.

The opportunity was therefore taken to pool resources of funding, together with those allocated for bus improvements, and complete all of the works within the same period."

Councillor Mrs Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"Please can I have your answers in writing? Of course the money spent on this simply adds value to an already undervalued Town Hall being primed for the big give away at tax payer's expense. Isn't it true that if this Council truly wanted to improve bus reliability and road safety then this amount of cash could have solved a whole host of related problems on Westbury Street and Thorntree Road where most buses are routed past schools and residential properties?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"Yes you can have my answers in writing. I answered a similar question at Council on 20th October 2010. We are not getting any complaints from the people living on Westbury Street or Thorntree Road. It would be better if the bus companies did not use Thorntree Road but it is not commercial viable for them not to use it. Officers are having a further look at the situation but the speed limit is already 20 mph on Westbury Street."

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

The Economic Climate Update report that would be presented at Cabinet on 25th November 2010 identified a number of positive improvements in the areas of Engineering and Manufacturing and also in the Service and Retail sectors. However, these were offset by around 120 job losses in the construction industry, with ROK at Preston Farm and Spectrum Scaffolding from Portrack going into liquidation.

The number of people claiming job seekers allowance in October 2010 was 6158, an increase of 21 over the previous month but down by 542 from the previous year.

Business & Enterprise North East had announced plans for a major restructure, which could result in the loss of 135 jobs across the region (a third of its total workforce).

The success of the Tees Valley bid to establish a Local Enterprise Partnership had already been confirmed and the Leader also confirmed that The Leaders & Electors Mayors Group was working with business sector representatives to determine an appropriate format for the proposed North East Enterprise Forum. This would provide the focus for economic regeneration and those strategic developments which had a regional dimension. It was hoped to form a shadow North East Enterprise Partnership whilst remaining conscious that governance and other arrangements would be interim until the details of functionality and areas of responsibility were fully determined.

The Government were yet to confirm the date of the Provisional settlement; however they were planning on early December. A Member's seminar was diared in for the 13th December and it was anticipated being able to provide an update on the Council's position at that meeting. The first budget report was scheduled to go to Cabinet on the 16th December which would outline the proposed approach (linking in the EIT reviews that were already underway).

A further Member's seminar was planned specifically for the budget on the 28th January 2011 and the usual Group discussion sessions would be diared once there was more certainty around timings. Consultation with the public, Local Strategic Partnership and businesses would be undertaken between December 2010 and February 2011. The final budget report would be presented to Special Cabinet and Council on the 24th February 2011 and 2nd March 2011 respectively.

The Central Library scheme, which had been planned for well over a year, was a good example of how the Council was "investing to save" and at the same time improving customer service by co-locating the contact centre and the cashiers service together. Residents would have access to multi-skilled customer service staff able to answer a range of questions all in one building. At the same time it would improve the library offer and provide a conference facility thereby reducing the need and costs associated with using off site facilities.

The budget position had given rise to some uncertainty around the housing element of the Local Development Framework and Members should be aware that the Council would be undertaking a scoping exercise to consider whether a

review of the strategy was necessary.

The Council would also be looking at reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy in light of both budget and policy changes.

The Leader had been informed that the LGA's Chief Executive had set a good example by accepted a pay package cut of 66%, down from £320,000 to less than £100k. The effect on our annual subscription to the Local Government Group, who were committed to a 30% reduction in year costs was awaited.