

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 19th January, 2011.

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 Aidan Cockerill, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Mrs Eileen Craggs, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, 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 Michael Smith, 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); M Batty (DNS); J Danks, L King, A Kelly (R); J Humphreys (CESC).

Also in attendance: A Bain (Chair of the Parkfield/Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Board); Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Maurice Frankland, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Liz Nesbitt and Cllr Mick Stoker.

C Declarations of Interest

232/10

There were no interests declared.

C Minutes

233/10

The minutes of the Special Council meeting and Ordinary Council meeting held on 24th November 2010 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record subject to the following correction to the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting:-

At page 632, minute C 228/10 in the recorded vote delete the words "the amendment to".

C Presentation to Alex Bain (Chair of the Parkfield/Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Board)

234/10

The Worshipful the Mayor explained that Alex Bain was retiring from the Chair of the Parkfield/Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Board). The Mayor presented Alex with a framed picture of the Infinity Bridge and thanked him on behalf of the Council for his dedication and commitment.

C Public Question Time

235/10

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

C Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee Minutes

236/10

Moved by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Sherris and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee

held on 3rd November 2010 (Minute ALC 22/10 - ALC 23/10) be confirmed.

C
237/10 **Audit Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhouse, seconded by Councillor Womphrey and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 6th December 2010 (Minute A 37/10 - A 47/10) be received.

C
238/10 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 25th November 2010 (Minute CAB 96/10 - CAB 111/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

C
239/10 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 16th December 2010 (Minute CAB 112/10 - CAB 124/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate subject to the following corrections:-

At minute CAB 112/10 page 579 at Councillor Mrs Beaumont's declaration delete the words "Community Centre" and replace with "Village Hall".

Also at minute CAB 115/10 page 586 at Councillor Mrs Beaumont's recorded vote delete the number "11".

Also at minute CAB 115/10, 4th Paragraph down, 4th line down - Please delete "Yarm Road/Butts Lane (Yarm)" and replace with "Yarm Road/Butts Lane (Eaglescliffe)".

C
240/10 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 20th December 2010 (Minute CAB 125/10 - CAB 135/10) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

C
241/10 **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Eddy, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 21st October 2010 (Minute CYP 40/10 - CYP 41/10) be confirmed.

C **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**
242/10

Moved by Councillor Eddy, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 10th November 2010 (Minute CYP 42/10 - CYP 47/10) be confirmed.

C **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**
243/10

Moved by Councillor Eddy, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 24th November 2010 (Minute CYP 48/10 - CYP 52/10) be confirmed.

C **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**
244/10

Moved by Councillor Apedaile, seconded by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee held on 26th October 2010 (Minute CAS 21/10 - CAS 26/10) be confirmed.

C **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**
245/10

Moved by Councillor Apedaile, seconded by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee held on 7th December 2010 (Minute CAS 27/10 - CAS 32/10) be confirmed.

C **Environment Select Committee Minutes**
246/10

Moved by Councillor Mrs Rigg, seconded by Councillor Smith and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 1st November 2010 (Minute ENV 26/10 - ENV 31/10) be confirmed.

C **Executive Scrutiny Committee Minutes**
247/10

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Rigg and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee held on 19th October 2010 (Minute EXC 15/10 - EXC 22/10) be received.

C **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**
248/10

Moved by Councillor Mrs Rigg, seconded by Councillor Gibson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 21st October 2010 (Minute HCS 27/10 - HCS 34/10) be confirmed.

C
249/10 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 7th September 2010 (Minute L 55/10 - L 57/10) be received.

C
250/10 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 21st October 2010 (Minute L 58/10 - L 83/10) be received.

C
251/10 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 4th November 2010 (Minute L 84/10 - L 92/10) be received.

C
252/10 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhead, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nelson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 23rd November 2010 (Minute L 93/10 - L 98/10) be received.

C
253/10 **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 November 2010 (Minute LSC 34/10 - LSC 36/10) be received.

C
254/10 **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 12th November 2010 (Minute LSC 37/10 - LSC 39/10) be received.

C **Planning Committee Minutes**
255/10

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 17th November 2010 (Minute P 67/10 - P 77/10) be received.

C **Planning Committee Minutes**
256/10

Moved by Councillor Rix, seconded by Councillor Salt and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 8th December 2010 (Minute P 78/10 - P 87/10) be received.

C **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**
257/10

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 28th October 2010 (Minute RTS 47/10 - RTS 52/10) be confirmed.

C **Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**
258/10

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cains and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 8th November 2010 (Minute RTS 53/10 - RTS 58/10) be confirmed.

C **Standards (Parish & Independent Representatives) Appointment Panel Minutes**
259/10

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Beaumont and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards (Parish & Independent Representatives) Appointment Panel held on 12th October 2010 (Minute SAP 1/10 - SAP 2/10) be confirmed.

C **Cleveland Fire Authority Minutes**
260/10

The minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority held on the 24th September 2010 were noted.

C **Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**
261/10

The minutes of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 15th September 2010 were noted.

C 262/10 Appointment to the Membership of Association of North East Councils for the Municipal Year 2010/2011

The Association of North East Councils had advised that the Council could appoint an additional Councillor representative to the Association. The Council had appointed the Leader of the Council plus 3 representatives, namely Councillors Coleman, Gibson and Fletcher. This appointment would be until the end of the Municipal Year 2010/11, and thereafter it was expected that the Council would seek to make subsequent appointments for a four year term at the AGM on the 25th May 2011 when the new Council returned.

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

Councillor Cook

RESOLVED that Councillor Cook be appointed to the Association of North East Councils for the Municipal Year 2010/2011.

C 263/10 Motion to Council

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

"As Members of Council will be aware, Cleveland Fire Brigade was intending to build seven new community fire stations, headquarters, training centre, workshops and youth academy. There was also the opportunity for SBC to work closely with the Brigade and look at what other public services could be delivered through the fire stations so that they become community 'hubs' for local residents.

However it has recently been announced that the bid from the North East Fire and Rescue Authorities of Cleveland, Co. Durham & Darlington and Northumberland has failed.

In making this decision, CLG appear to have had no regard for the high unemployment in the area and the positive impact this project would have brought in respect of the local economy, local jobs and private sector investment, or for the longer term recovery of the region.

I would therefore respectfully request Council to support a lobbying of the CLG Fire Minister, Bob Neill MP to urgently review the funding allocation decision in relation to the PFI capital funding and, if that is not possible, to consider alternative means of apportioning any other unallocated capital funding if any becomes available within the spending review period."

The motion was carried.

C 264/10 Motion to Council

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule

12.1. Moved by Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Fletcher:-

"This Council notes with concern that high street banks are planning to stop accepting cheques despite protests from consumer groups and businesses.

This Council also notes with concern that in December 2009, the Payments Council agreed on behalf of the major banks to scrap cheques in 2018.

This Council notes that nearly four million cheques are still being written each day and that many people still prefer to pay for goods and services in this way.

This Council also notes that many people and organisations including the elderly, businesses and charities, would be seriously affected as a result and that 126 MPs from all parties have signed Early Day Motion 258 calling for the banks to reconsider their proposals.

This Council further notes that on November 2nd 2010, David Ward MP presented a 10 minute rule bill to the House of Commons which would place a duty on the City Regulator, the Financial Services Authority, to ensure that cheques stay in use until suitable alternatives are found and that the Bill will be debated in June 2011.

Therefore this Council calls upon the Chief Executive to write to our MPs asking them to vigorously lobby support for the bill and also to write to the Prime Minister expressing this Council's concern about the plans to abolish cheques and urging him to provide Parliamentary time to ensure that the Bill is passed into law."

The motion was carried.

C
265/10 **Members' Question Time**

The following question was submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the Leader of the Council:-

"Who as at Sunday 16th January, is paying for the security of the former Saltergill School site?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"The purchaser and has been from that date."

Councillor Eddy asked the following supplementary question:-

"So he was liable from Sunday, 16th January?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"Yes, in fact I'm advised that the purchaser has been liable since 23rd August last year."

The following question was submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the

Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport:-

"Bearing in mind Python Properties was granted status of preferred bidder for Thornaby Town Hall without need of the attraction of outside support is the bid still viable?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"We have no reason to believe that the bid is not viable.

Stockton Council and Python Properties have signed up to a Development Agreement, a current live document both parties are working with for the delivery of a sustainable project for the restoration and regeneration of Thornaby Town Hall."

Councillor Eddy asked the following supplementary question:-

"What proof do we as a Council have that this is a sustainable bid?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"It is a sustainable bid because the bid was accepted and it was the only viable bid and it will bring the building back into use. The other two bids did not have viable business plans."

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

"Yet another accident occurred on the Mandale Triangle on January 8th involving a bus and a mini bus. Fortunately there was no serious injury. Can the Cabinet Member tell us what further measures will be introduced to ensure road safety in this area and links into it?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"Focusing on the core routes, the Mandale Gyratory was one scheme that delivered significant bus journey time savings on all the routes between Stockton, Thornaby and Middlesbrough. The bus operators were of the view that it was an early priority, so that vital journey time savings could be achieved quickly.

Within the development of any road scheme, road safety is always a primary factor and this one was no exception. Clearly the introduction of a contra flow bus lane would be a big change to motorists but the signing that was installed as a result, was in accordance with the regulations.

Despite this, the Borough Council placed additional signage on Middleway to reinforce the message to motorists. As part of the original scheme, it is the intention to apply green surfacing to the bus lane to make it explicitly clear this is a bus lane, however due to the poor weather (temperature and moisture), this activity has been postponed until conditions are more suitable to lay the green surfacing."

Councillor Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"When will the Cabinet Member accept that what has been created is the equivalent of a demolition derby circuit complete with casualties and wreckage - which ward members, TTC, local business and local people pointed out to officers prior to the commencement of the scheme, I mention that fact because he seems oblivious to that such meetings took place, see minutes of last council. It is not solely about the junction of Middle Street and Mandale Road. It is about the whole set up from Riverside roundabout right through to Acklam Road where minor accidents have occurred as well as countless near misses. Does somebody have to be killed before he snaps out of this state of sleepy denial and we know best?"

The Cabinet for Member Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"My recollection of the Ward Councillors comments were that the scheme would cause congestion not cause accidents. Regrettably, there have been two accidents, both involving buses on that section of road, however police investigations have shown that car driver error was a factor.

We expect to apply the green surfacing in the near future and will continue to monitor this area for road safety. In the meantime the Police will continue to support the Council in ensuring that any deliberate motoring offences are adequately enforced."

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

"At the heart of SBC's Core Strategy is the priority regeneration of Stockton High Street and development of North Shore. In these austere times of low investment and job losses, is it wise to adhere to such restrictive priorities?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"One of the key elements of the Core Strategy is to support the regeneration of Stockton's Core Area which includes the development of North Shore and Stockton High Street but its policies also support development elsewhere in the borough.

In terms of housing, the Strategy also encourages development in the wider conurbation, Thornaby and Billingham to support the regeneration of those areas.

In terms of retailing, the roles of Billingham and Thornaby as district centres and Yarm as a specialist niche shopping destination are supported, as are local centres.

With regard to employment, its policies protect existing employment land for both specialist and general uses and encourage new types of economic activity in both the urban and rural areas, as well as encouraging the creation of employment and training opportunities by developers and employers. (Policy

CS7). The policies are intended to encourage and support development not hinder it."

Councillor Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"Regeneration of Stockton High Street will need to be extremely radical and certainly long term. In fact it has to be re-invented and tailored to measure to sit in with surrounding centres and not be in direct competition. As I have stated in the past, the river and all the potential that offers needs to be at the heart of regeneration as well as other measures that have been mentioned. That said, Members and Officers must realise that would be developers cannot be shoe horned into the High Street and North Bank for a quick fix whilst simultaneously rejecting schemes like that proposed for Springs. Isn't it the case that refusal of that application not only perpetuates dereliction on a highly successful retail park in Thornaby on Tees allegedly a constituent part of this Borough but also loses jobs for desperate people in desperate times as well as alienating investors? Can we have some common sense on this matter?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"The purpose of planning is to direct development to the most appropriate locations and conversely to deter it in inappropriate locations where it is likely to have detrimental impacts on the borough. In deciding what an appropriate location is planning seeks to achieve a wider range of benefits than just the obvious ones. Having successfully developed a thriving centre at Thornaby, and on the way with securing investment to improving Billingham town centre, it is important to concentrate any investment we can in Stockton town centre to support those businesses and jobs already in the town and also to respond to the community who regularly seek improvements to Stockton town centre.

I also believe Councillor Walmsley is on the Local Development Framework Steering Group where such policy is decided and where he could have made an input to the policy documents but instead he has chosen to put his apologies in for 19 meetings."

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

"Can the Cabinet Member confirm that it is SBC's aim to encourage the use of public transport and reduce reliance on the private car?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"Yes, the Council's Local Transport Plan sets out policy on promoting public transport and reducing the reliance on the private motor car."

Councillor Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"If that is indeed the Council's aim, does this only apply to areas away from Stockton High Street or planning applications away from Stockton High Street where we are told additional free parking will be created affectively making it exempt from this aim and presumably paid for by residents of Yarm and visitors

to that town?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"We have had parking charges for a number of years. Parking charges are ring fenced to go back into the Highways Car Parking budget."

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

"It was stated at a meeting last week that measures to regenerate Stockton High Street would include investment of £3m on heritage initiatives and restoration of historic buildings. Will the Cabinet Member inform Members how this money will be raised?"

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"The money will be raised from the following:-

Heritage Lottery Fund - £1,740,400
SBC - £290,050
ONE - £290,050
Private - £945,850

Total - £3,266,350"

Councillor Walmsley asked the following supplementary question:-

"Isn't it amazing that cash can be raised for any historic building or heritage site north of the river including a pile of fire blackened stones whilst Thornaby Town Hall has to be pump primed with almost £3/4m to give it away for a pittance? I foresee the day when places like St Pauls, St Lukes and even St Peter ad Vincula fall into serious disrepair. I fear that we will have to rely on tombola stalls and raffles to restore them."

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport responded with:-

"We have tried before for Heritage Funding for Thornaby Town Hall but we have been turned down. We were able carry out roof repairs with the £350,000 we had for match funding any heritage bid.

C
266/10 **Forward Plan and Leaders Statement**

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

The Leader confirmed that the Council had received the settlement grant from Government which represented a 12.1% reduction in cash terms for 2011/12 and a further 8.7% reduction in 2012/13.

There would also be reductions to the annual £30m Specific and Area Based Grants. The Council had been notified that £9.6m of these would stop but there was a further £3m of grant support which was unconfirmed.

This meant the Council would need to find £29m of budget savings by 2014 which would involve the same planned and managed approach that the Council had adopted.

This had helped the Council, so far, to avoid the need for large-scale redundancies or cuts to services. Wherever possible the Council had been able to shrink the workforce by natural wastage and freezing vacant posts, with compulsory redundancies very much a last resort.

However, faced with such a challenging budget position, it won't be possible to safeguard every service and regrettably this would have an impact on those employees working in those areas.

The Leader outlined that it seems like a long time ago but was only since the last Council meeting that the winter weather really set in and since then Council workers right across the authority pulled out all the stops to keep services running.

Refuse and recycling collections went ahead without a single bin missed across some 80,000 households and Council staff kept services such as home care to vulnerable and elderly people running despite the conditions.

In two weeks, gritters spread more than 2,700 tonnes of salt, across the Borough's 235 mile network of major routes as well as roads to outlying communities, shopping centres and industrial estates. The stock reserves were holding up well with over 1200 tonnes in stock and a further 2,500 tonnes on order.

It was fair to say that Stockton Council employees across the board really did go the extra mile to keep services running and deserve thanks for that and the Leader was grateful to Councillor Mrs Beaumont for expressing that thanks publicly in a letter to the Gazette.

Keeping residents informed about the Council winter weather response was also important. It was understood that the Council was attracting a growing army of "Twitterers" with over 1,300 people following the gritting updates on the social media site.

The Leader's favourite comment that was posted when the bad weather was at its height was: "Thanks, you are doing a great job – Stockton Council rocks!"

The weather also failed to take the shine off the Stockton Sparkles festival which helped many traders in the town to report a successful run-up to Christmas. During the month-long event, the Castlegate Centre reported pre-Christmas trading up by 6 per cent, Wellington Square also increased business and Debenham's said customer numbers were "definitely ahead of expectations".

From Tuesday, 1st February Preston Hall Museums; Victorian Street would be back open for business alongside the Museum's historic Ballroom following major refurbishment.

Two new shops – a Chemist and a Violin Maker - had been added to the Victorian Street and the Ballroom would be home to a new, free exhibition called "Behind the Scenes at the Museum" which included a display of the museum's more unusual artefacts.

Following Tees Valley's successful bid to form a LEP in October – last week Government granted permission to another North-East LEP – made up of 7 councils in the North of the region.

Meanwhile Round - 1 submissions to the Regional Growth Fund would close on Friday, 21st January 2011 with the Tees Valley submitting 12 bids from across the private and public sectors – which included for Stockton a £3m bid to regenerate the Parkfield and Mill Lane areas.

An exciting new initiative was launched on 18th January 2011 known as the Stockton wall. Basically this was a computer product for 11 to 19yr olds identifying job and career opportunities in Stockton.

It was an inspirational media product that would assist with career advice for young people and parents and the Leader recommended that Members log on to stocktonwall.co.uk and see the advantages of this unique educational initiative.

Tees Achieve would launch the "100 in 100 Apprenticeship Challenge" on 20th January 2011. The Council was supporting the campaign and coordinating the efforts of learning providers across the Borough to raise the profile of apprenticeship opportunities in the area. The aim was to generate 100 apprenticeships across the North east within 100 days and promote how taking on an apprentice could help local businesses address skills gaps.

The total number of people in Stockton on JSA in December was 6,223 an increase of 72 over the previous month, being a 1.2% increase.