

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 7th September, 2011.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Paul Baker); Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Mark Chatburn, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Michael Clark, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Phillip Dennis, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Elliot Kennedy, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr David Rose, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Andrew Stephenson, Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey, Cllr Mick Womphrey and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: N Schneider (CE); D E Bond, P K Bell, N Hart, S Walton (LD); P Dobson, R Poundford, N Laws (DNS); J Danks, L King (R); J Humphreys (CESC).

Also in attendance: Lieutenant Colonel John Heron (The Rifles), Chris Lawton (Rifles Care for Casualties), I Bannister (Royal British Legion), Ian Forrester (Royal British Legion), Trevor Edgar (Yorkshire Regiment Benevolent Fund); Richard Perrin (Lathe Investments), Tim Cornford (Lathe Investments); Paul Leng (Market Petitioner), Martin Cain (Market Petitioner), Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Ross Patterson and Cllr Bill Woodhead.

C Declarations of Interest

76/11

Councillor Mrs Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Cabinet Minutes - CAB 28/11 as she was a Board Member of Know How North East.

Councillor Mrs Rigg declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 40 - Councillor Walmsley's second Member Question as she was the founder of Protect Preston Park and a member of Friends of Preston Park Committee. Councillor Mrs Rigg withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Dennis declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 40 - Councillor Walmsley's second Member Question as he was a member of Friends of Preston Park Committee.

Councillor Chatburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 40 - Councillor Walmsley's second Member Question as he was a member of Friends of Preston Park Committee.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Cabinet Minutes - CAB 27/11 as she was a Trustee of Shopmobility.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Cabinet Minutes - CAB 31/11 as she was the Chair of Stockton and District Advice and Information Service Board.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Cabinet Minutes - CAB 28/11 as he was the Chair of Know How North East.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 18 - Housing & Community Safety Minutes - HCS 53/10 as he was on the board of two Registered Social Landlords.

**C
77/11** **Mayors Charity Presentation for Armed Forces Week to the Royal British Legion (Stockton), the Rifles Care for Casualties Charity and the Yorkshire Regiment Benevolent Fund**

The Worshipful the Mayor reported that in June 2011 as part of Stockton's Armed Forces Week the first Charity Duck Race was held at Preston Park. The event was a great success and over £2,900 was raised. This amount was shared between the Royal British Legion, the Rifles Care for Casualties Charity and the Yorkshire Regiment Benevolent Fund.

Lieutenant Colonel John Heron (The Rifles), Chris Lawton (Rifles Care for Casualties), I Bannister (Royal British Legion), Ian Forrester (Royal British Legion), Trevor Edgar (Yorkshire Regiment Benevolent Fund) were in attendance at the meeting and collected their cheques for £970 each.

**C
78/11** **Presentation by Lathe Investments - Castlegate Centre Enhancements**

Richard Perrin (Lathe Investments) and Tim Cornford (Lathe Investments) were in attendance at the meeting and outlined their vision for the Castlegate Centre enhancements. They reported that Lathe's plans were to refurbish the Market Hall and increase the retail square footage. They felt that there was synergy with relocating Stockton Market to the Castlegate end of Stockton High Street. Plans were being prepared and Lathe Investments were fully committed to the scheme.

The Worshipful the Mayor thanked Richard Perrin and Tim Cornford for their presentation and their attendance at the meeting.

**C
79/11** **Stockton Market Petition**

Members were presented with a report that outlined the context to the presentation of a petition to the Council from Market Traders regarding a proposed relocation of part of the Stockton Market.

The report recognised that the market remained an asset to Stockton Town Centre, but that by making a number of improvements as part of a wider range of measures to boost the economic performance of the High Street, an improved offer for a wider range of customers could be achieved and additional complementary activities and markets could take place leading to an increased overall footfall for market traders to benefit from.

On 7th June 2011 Market Traders presented a petition entitled, "Leave our market where it is. Tell the Council" to the Mayor. The petition contained 2,828 valid signatures and therefore exceeded the threshold of 2,000 signatures required for petitions to be debated at Council.

The report gave a brief history of Stockton Market. Stockton had a rich history of markets in the town dating back to 1310 when the original Market Charter

granted the Council rights to hold a Wednesday market to the south of Dovecot Street. These rights continued today by virtue of various legislation passed in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Saturday Market became a franchise in 1984 under the Food Act, giving the market the same rights as on a Wednesday, it also operated under the same acts as the Wednesday market. The smaller Friday market was operated as a statutory market under the 1984 Food Act when every authority was granted the right to hold a market within its own boundary.

The Wednesday and Saturday Markets attracted in excess of 60 traders stretching some 300m from Marks and Spencers in the north to 99, High Street (Labyrinth) to the south. The Friday market attracted around 10 traders who were dispersed across the same broad area.

The layout of the Wednesday and Saturday markets was revised in 2007 when part of the market immediately outside the Castlegate Centre was moved across the High Street and accommodated within the main market area. These markets had continued to trade in the same location with the exception of when SIRF took place, necessitating the need to relocate approximately 25 traders. The first Christmas market festival also resulted in 15 traders being relocated to the front of Castlegate Centre. When traders were relocated to accommodate these activities, then the Council faced a reduction in income received as relocated traders were given a free pitch.

The changes to the market brought about by the 2007 refurbishment had led to a more haphazard and less regular layout which did not lend itself to easy access and thoroughfare, whilst the differing stall sizes that prevailed and lack of uniformity in canopy design contributed towards a somewhat untidy appearance.

The report then highlighted the need to change the Market. The importance of the market in Stockton was widely recognised, indeed it remained a significant cornerstone of the plans to regenerate the High Street. Stockton High Street, like most high streets up and down the country, was however suffering at present in terms of low footfall, high vacancy rates and high numbers of charity shops. To do nothing to the High Street was not an option as new life and vibrancy needed to be injected if the economic performance of the High Street was to be improved. The future vision for the market was therefore to enhance the current offer and appearance so that existing and new customers would be attracted to Stockton market, thereby arresting the slow decline in market stall numbers and quality of goods, and also enabling the Council to operate complementary activities including specialist markets which would further drive up footfall and vibrancy in the town centre.

Given the space occupied on the High Street by the Wednesday and Saturday markets, it was difficult to attract other activities such as events and specialist markets without relocating part of the regular market. These activities required a prominent location on the High Street and usually included a Saturday, one of the market days. A permanent relocation of part of the market would ensure that the market was given a dedicated space from which they would no longer be required to move and freeing up space north of the Town Hall for the creation of a high quality public realm and multifunctional open space in the High Street to

accommodate events and specialist markets.

A relocation of part of the market also provided an opportunity to enhance its appearance and layout, as well as mix and offer. Canopies needed replacing and made more uniform, whilst the stalls themselves if grouped alongside stalls of a similar size would create more of a linear feel to the market without appearing overly regimented yet offering improved pedestrian circulation and servicing opportunities. In reconfiguring the market layout there would also be an opportunity to specifically target certain types of goods currently underrepresented in the market so that a more diverse range and mix of goods could be provided thereby appealing to a wider cross section of the shopping public. Inevitably these improvements would drive up the quality of the overall market offer in Stockton.

Stockton Town Centre Prospectus was introduced in March to showcase a number of projects designed to arrest the decline of the economic performance of the centre. As part of these proposals the Market would be concentrated to the south of the Town Hall and in front of the Castlegate Centre. Despite less gross space in which to trade, all market stalls could be accommodated in this space due largely to some de-cluttering of street furniture and phone boxes, as well as a more functional use of space leading towards improved pedestrian flow. Marketing assistance for traders would be made available so that existing customers would be able to find traders in any new layout.

A report was taken to Cabinet in July 2011 outlining the results of the consultation. The following paragraphs dealt with the market issues:-

"It is proposed that the regular market will run from the Town Hall southwards to the end of the High Street. This proposal was presented at public consultation and to the Markets Forum with 50% or 106 of the 212 respondents who gave a view on proposals supporting the idea of redesigning the layout of the market as proposed and a further 13% supporting the need to redesign the layout but not as proposed.

The concepts presented to the Market Forum received mixed reviews with some traders voicing their concerns around the amount of space that would be available for the market, potential conflict with bus stands and bus operations and the idea that putting stalls in front of the Castlegate Centre would create a sense of separation from the rest of the market. However, support was also given to the proposals with some traders citing the need to 'move with the times' and adapt a more modern approach to trading. This view was supported by the predominantly supportive comments posted on the popular Gazette Live website by residents and users of the market. Furthermore, the proposals received support from the owners of the Castlegate Centre, who were keen to see stalls located adjacent to their shopping centre."

Comments from the public, partners and market traders were being taken into consideration in designing options for a new layout and location for the Market. Further discussions would be held with Market Traders and the Market Operations Team to ensure that the revised layout functioned properly and meets the needs of the Traders, users of the market and other stakeholders and businesses in the town centre. Whilst the new proposal could differ from that included in the Prospectus, there would still in all likelihood a need to move

traders.

Paul Leng (Market Petitioner) and Martin Cain (Market Petitioner) were in attendance at the meeting and made representations. They briefly outlined their own history of having stalls on the market and then outlined the reasons why they felt the Market should not be moved. The reasons included:-

- * The Market would not survive in the new location.
- * A vortex would be created in the middle of the High Street
- * Relocating the Market would cause a downturn in the High Street economy

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport then addressed the meeting. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport thanked the Market Traders for their representations and then outlined that he felt Stockton Market was a huge asset to the High Street but it was important that the High Street and Stockton Market moved forward to improve the performance of the High Street. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport felt that doing nothing was not an option for the High Street and indicated that discussions would continue with Market Traders.

The Leader of the Council outlined that he felt the High Street needed to re-focus its strengths and the Council wanted to work with the Market Traders to achieve this target. The High Street had one of the highest number of vacant units in the country and something needed to be done to help the economy of the High Street and make a more successful vibrant market.

The Worshipful the Mayor thanked the petitioners, Members and everyone who had contributed to the debate.

C
80/11 **Public Question Time**

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

C
81/11 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2011 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C
82/11 **Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Mrs O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee held on 15th June 2011 (Minute ALC 1/11 - ALC 7/11) be confirmed.

C
83/11 **Audit Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Woodhouse, seconded by Councillor Kirton and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 27th June 2011 (Minute A 1/11 - A 14/11) be received.

C
84/11 **Cabinet Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Beall and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet held on 14th July 2011 (Minute CAB 21/11 - CAB 41/11) be confirmed or received as appropriate.

C
85/11 **Children & Young People Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Inman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Clark and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held on 9th June 2011 (Minute CYP 1/11 - CYP 5/11) be confirmed.

C
86/11 **Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Stoker, seconded by Councillor Stott and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee held on 14th June 2011 (Minute CAS 1/11 - CAS 6/11) be confirmed.

C
87/11 **Environment Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cooke, seconded by Councillor Wilburn and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 18th April 2011 (Minute ENV 45/10 - ENV 49/10) be confirmed.

C
88/11 **Environment Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cooke, seconded by Councillor Wilburn and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Select Committee held on 20th June 2011 (Minute ENV 1/11 - ENV 7/11) be confirmed.

C
89/11 **Executive Scrutiny Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Apedaile and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee held on 5th April 2011 (Minute EXC 61/10 - EXC 68/10) be received.

C
90/11 **Executive Scrutiny Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Lupton, seconded by Councillor Apedaile and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Scrutiny Committee held on 5th July 2011 (Minute EXC 1/11 - EXC 7/11) be received.

C
91/11 **Health Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Javed, seconded by Councillor Faulks and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health Select Committee held on 13th June 2011 (Minute H 1/11 - H 7/11) be confirmed.

C
92/11 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Brown and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 7th April 2011 (Minute HCS 50/10 - HCS 54/10) be confirmed.

C
93/11 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Brown and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 23rd June 2011 (Minute HCS 1/11 - HCS 9/11) be confirmed.

C
94/11 **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Cherrett, seconded by Councillor Brown and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 30th June 2011 (Minute HCS 10/11 - HCS 17/11) be confirmed.

C
95/11 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 27th June 2011 (Minute L 1/11 - L 7/11) be received.

C
96/11 **Licensing Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 4th July 2011 (Minute L 8/11 - L 13/11) be received.

**C
97/11 Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 2nd June 2011 (Minute LSC 1/11 - LSC 3/11) be received.

**C
98/11 Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 3rd June 2011 (Minute LSC 4/11 - LSC 6/11) be received.

**C
99/11 Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 14th June 2011 (Minute LSC 7/11 - LSC 9/11) be received.

**C
100/11 Licensing Sub Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Kirton, seconded by Councillor Johnson and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee held on 24th June 2011 (Minute LSC 10/11 - LSC 12/11) be received.

**C
101/11 Planning Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Kirby and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 8th June 2011 (Minute P 1/11 - P 6/11) be received.

**C
102/11 Planning Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Gibson, seconded by Councillor Kirby and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 29th June 2011 (Minute P 7/11 - P 14/11) be received.

**C
103/11 Regeneration & Transport Select Committee Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilburn and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee held on 20th June 2011 (Minute RTS 1/11 - RTS 6/11) be confirmed.

C
104/11 **Standards Committee Minutes**

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 31st March 2011 (Minute S 77/10 - S 84/10) be received.

C
105/11 **Standards Committee Minutes**

Moved by Mr F W Hayes, seconded by Councillor Dixon and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 9th June 2011 (Minute S 1/11 - S 10/11) be received.

C
106/11 **Cleveland Fire Authority Minutes**

The minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority held on the 25th March 2011 were noted.

C
107/11 **Special Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the Special Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 16th February 2011 were noted.

C
108/11 **Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 24th February 2011 were noted.

C
109/11 **Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 15th April 2011 were noted.

C
110/11 **Extraordinary Cleveland Police Authority Executive Minutes**

The minutes of the Cleveland Police Authority Executive held on the 26th May 2011 were noted.

C
111/11 **Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel**

The minutes of the Schools' Workforce Joint Consultative Panel held on the 12th July 2011 were noted.

C **Commemoration Working Group**

112/11

The minutes of the Commemoration Working Group held on the 22nd July 2011 were noted.

C Nominations and Amendments to Council Committees, Panels etc
113/11 2011/2015

Members were informed that at its Annual Meeting, held on Wednesday 25th May 2011, the Council approved appointments to its Committees, Panels and Joint/Outside Bodies for 2011/15. Following the meeting a number of positions remained vacant.

At its meeting on 29th June 2011 Council agreed appointments to some of the vacant positions, however, vacancies remained and they were detailed within the report.

Since the Council meeting on 29th June a nomination to fill the vacancy on the Markets' Forum had been received. The detail of that nomination was:-

Nomination - Councillor Kennedy

Following the appointment of the Leader of the Council, at the Annual Meeting, he announced the Council's Cabinet and agreed the responsibilities of each portfolio, as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The agreed responsibilities included a small number of changes to those which existed under the previous arrangements. Details of these were reported to Cabinet in June and the Council's Constitution was amended accordingly.

One of the changes to responsibilities saw Emergency Planning (including flood risk management) move from the Corporate Management and Finance portfolio to the Environment portfolio. This had necessitated a change to a Joint Body appointment made at the Annual Meeting in May. Details were:-

Cleveland Emergency Planning - Replace Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Finance with Cabinet Member for the Environment.

A request had been received for the Vice Chairmanship of the Executive Scrutiny Committee to be amended.

Details of the proposed amendment were:-

Vice Chairman of Executive Scrutiny Committee - Replace Councillor Lynne Apedaile with Councillor Tina Large

RESOLVED that:-

1. Councillor Kennedy be appointed to the Markets' Forum.
2. On the Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Body the Cabinet Member for the Environment replace the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Finance.

3. Councillor Tina Large replace Councillor Lynne Apedaile as the Vice Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee.

C Members' Question Time

114/11

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

"Following recent revelations involving Cleveland Police and Cleveland Police Authority, isn't it time that SBC acted responsibly and called for fundamental change to the whole structure?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"Despite this Council's objection to the compulsory introduction of Police Commissioners (Motion carried in March 2011), Members will be aware that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill 2010/11 continues to pass through Parliament.

The Bill proposes changes to Police accountability and governance, including the replacement of Police Authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (as set out in the Conservative manifesto).

The House of Lords amendments are with the Commons, but there is no date set yet for the process to recommence following the summer recess."

The following question was submitted by Councillor Walmsley for response by the Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure & Culture:-

"I understand that the protest group formed to defend Preston Park against development is still active. Bearing in mind the massive investment in the park, do they still have reason to be fearful that the park will be built on?"

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure & Culture responded with:-

"The Council is currently investing £7million in improvements to Preston Hall and Park as our primary visitor attraction. Our investments and the funding from the Heritage Lottery are designed to recreate the original character of the house in its parkland setting.

As a result of this investment the Park and Hall have been attracting record numbers of visitors.

The "Save Preston Park" group are actively working with Stockton Council on these initiatives and many of its members have become regular volunteers within the Park. The Group's Chair is a member of the Park Management Group, alongside officers, elected members, and other voluntary groups. I don't believe there is anything for them to be fearful of."

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

"Can the Leader of the Council offer any reassurance to Head Teachers of highly successful schools who recognise the knock on effects that a proposed (oddly named) Free School will have on education in the borough?"

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

"Yes. Proposers of Free Schools are required to consult with local authorities as admission authorities on their proposed arrangements and through this dialogue the Council will do all it can to minimise any knock on effect on other schools. Headteachers have been involved with the Council's response to the application from BO2SS for a second secondary school on Ingleby Barwick and the Council's clear alternative of an enlarged All Saints has been submitted to the Department together with statements from neighbouring high performing secondary schools that see the Council's option as the preferred option. Of course, no decisions have been made regarding any Free Schools in Stockton. The Council will be informed by the end of September as to whether any applications have been approved to pre-opening stage."

The following question was submitted by Councillor Walmsley for response by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance:-

"SBC has once again been short-listed for national recognition as a top performing council and employees have been understandably praised for their laudable efforts in getting the Council to that position. Will the Executive of this council therefore take this into consideration the next time redundancies are announced and ensure that deserved payments for fantastic service will not be targeted for reduction as a means to save cash?"

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

"The Council values its employees highly but the continued budgetary pressures have meant that potential savings need to be investigated from all areas, including terms of employment. Full discussions were held with the Trade Unions over a number of months and amendments to the proposals were made as a result. This meant that the Trade Unions were able to recommend acceptance of the changes and the agreement with them means that our redundancy scheme still compares favourably with other schemes in the Tees Valley and protects those employees who are currently part of the EIT review programme. Steps have also been taken to minimise redundancies and a comprehensive package of support measures for staff at risk of redundancy has been put in place."

The following question was submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance:-

"In the light of a recent Planning Committee meeting regarding planning permission appertaining to land owned by the owner of the Tall Trees hotel and the stated financial difficulties can the appropriate Cabinet Member explain to the Council how the refusal of an offer of one million pounds plus demolition costs AND any security costs satisfy this Councils filial duty to the rate payers of

the Borough of Stockton?"

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

"The offer of £1m was conditional upon obtaining planning permission for residential development. This was not accepted as there was a significant risk that this was unlikely as it was not in accordance with planning policies and this was re-affirmed by the latest Planning Committee decision. Therefore the decision to sell Saltergill for non residential use, whilst at the same time safeguarding the Council through overage payments if residential development were to happen, complies with the Council's fiduciary duty to taxpayers. Demolition costs and security costs were consistent in all offers."

Council Eddy asked the following supplementary question:-

"If that were the case do I assume no residential dwellings were agreed at the last Planning Committee or was the last Planning Committee badly minuted as in the Tall Trees neighbourhood there was an agreement that there would be no housing in a 20 year period and therefore the agreement seems to be void."

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

"I was unable to hear parts of your supplementary question. If you could outline your supplementary question to myself and Councillor Smith, between us we will determine who should respond. From the part of your supplementary question which I could hear, I feel it may be outside of my Corporate Finance and Management remit."

The following question was submitted by Councillor Eddy for response by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance:-

"Can Councillor Mrs McCoy confirm that Outwood Grange employed by Stockton Council acted legally by writing to parents about the closure of St Patricks College on 12 January to pupils for a P L L day and explain that the employer Stockton would not be liable for any problems regarding pupils during this closure?"

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

"Outwood Grange as a National Leader in Education took the decision to hold a Learning Pathway and Planning day in St Patrick's RC College on the 12th January 2011.

This day was intended as an opportunity for all pupils with their parents and carers to meet with their mentor for thirty minutes to discuss issues such as attendance and academic targets as well as specific issues for individual year groups – option choices for Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10, progression into post 16 education for Year 11 and discussions with Year 7 regarding how they had settled into school in their first term. The experience was evaluated to be of benefit to pupils to give discrete attention to their school experience with their parents and carers present. 94% of parents reported they found the day helpful and 94% felt they had been valuable information to help their child in the

next stage of their education. The pupils were given work to complete at home when they were not attending their interview and a code of authorised absence was entered into registers.

Outwood Grange as a National Leader in Education had previously evoked the Power to Innovate in failing schools which had included the opportunity to hold such days.

I can confirm that a letter was sent by the Headteacher to parents advising them that the school would be closed for the purpose of a Learning Pathway and Planning day on 12th January this year.

With regard to liability for problems regarding pupils during the closure I assume this refers to any incidents involving pupils during the time they would otherwise be at school and I can confirm that the letter to parents was sufficient in this regard.

The school does not intend to hold a Learning Pathway and Planning day again this year. From September this year the school has a new Headteacher and a new Governing Body; the National Leader in Education is no longer deployed at the school.

The outcomes for the school this year are exceptional; 99% of pupils have achieved the Level 2 threshold (5 x A*-C grades), the highest in the Borough."

Councillor Eddy asked the following supplementary question:-

"I read the letter you are referring to but you haven't answered my question. The question I asked was "was it illegal to close the school to pupils" bearing in mind that a legal barrister from London (Mr Harkness) said that a school can only close for 6 days each academic year."

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

"The response was in my statement. My concern is why Councillor Eddy did not think to congratulate St Patricks School as 99% of pupils have achieved the Level 2 threshold (5 x A*-C grades), the highest in the Borough. As a Ward Councillor for Thornaby I would have thought he would be shouting it from the roof tops."

C 115/11 Forward Plan and Leaders Statement

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

At the Cabinet meeting to be held on 8th September 2011, Members would be updated on some of the positive developments in the local Economy.

These included news that Stillington - based Darchem had secured a £20m contract with Boeing that would create 100 jobs, Pickering Lifts in Stockton had plans to double its £25m turnover in 5 years and planning permission had been granted for Air Products to develop an advanced gasification plant that could create up to 700 jobs in its 3 – year construction phase.

Since the last meeting of Council the Tees Valley was successful in its multi-site Enterprise Zone bid which included NorthShore and Belasis Hall Technology Park in Stockton.

Also for decision at Cabinet would be the procurement of design and build and ICT providers to deliver the new North Shore Health Academy and remodelling of Thornaby Academy. This followed the funding approval for both these important projects that were key to our "Campus Stockton" model.

The Leader of the Council also recognised the success of Stockton's schools, colleges and sixth forms in the GCSE and A Levels results. A fantastic 80% of students gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade C or above which was the best ever results for Stockton and for A Levels the overall number of students gaining A* - B grades was also the best ever.

The Leader of the Council passed on his congratulations to the pupils, teachers, support staff and governors on a such a terrific achievement.

Cabinet would also be provided with an update on Southern Cross Healthcare. Members were aware that Southern Cross operated 8 care homes in the Borough and that the Council had been working with their landlords, the PCT, Southern Cross and prospective new care providers to ensure the care of residents was not disrupted. The Council had written to all residents and they had been given assurances that the care homes in Stockton were considered viable businesses.

The Leader of the Council reported that Stockton Council had again been shortlisted for the APSE Council of the Year Award. Stockton were the current holders of the "Overall Council of the Year" title so to be shortlisted again was a great honour.