

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 13th June, 2012.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile), Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Mark Chatburn, 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 Kevin Faulks, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Elliot Kennedy, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Kathryn Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr David Rose, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Andrew Stephenson, Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Mick Stoker, 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 (LD); P Dobson (DNS); J Danks (R); J Humphreys, P Kelly (CESC).

Also in attendance: 4 Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Tracey Stott and Cllr Bill Woodhead.

C 38/12 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Chatburn declared a personal Prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Motion - Insolvency Office as he was employed by the Insolvency Office. Councillor Chatburn withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Motion - Tobacco Packaging as he was a director of the research agency that produced data for The Social Norms Project that was mentioned in the motion.

Councillor Mrs Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Motion - Tobacco Packaging as she was a director of the research agency that produced data for The Social Norms Project that was mentioned in the motion.

C 39/12 **Public Question Time**

The Director of Law & Democracy informed Members that no Public Questions had been received.

C 40/12 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May 2012 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C 41/12 **Police & Crime Panels**

Council, at its meeting held on 19th January 2012 (Min C 179/11 refers), considered an update report in respect of the Police & Crime Commissioners and the Police & Crime Panels required as a result of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

It was intended that the first meeting of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel would take place in June or July 2012 and therefore Council was invited to appoint 4 representatives in accordance with the overall political balance. The 4 places available were allocated in accordance with the current political composition of the four local authorities involved.

RESOLVED that Councillors Ken Dixon (IBIS), Terry Laing (CONS), Steve Nelson (LAB) and Norman Stephenson (LAB) be appointed to the Police & Crime Panel for the 2012-2015 Municipal Years.

C
42/12

Members' Policy Seminar Programme

Consideration was given to a report that provided Council with an overview of content from the Members Policy Seminar held in May 2012 which gave an update on the emergency planning arrangements for the borough and the latest developments in relation to the children's centres. Supporting material from the seminar programme could be found on the member pages of the intranet.

Members Policy Seminars were an important vehicle for both informing and consulting with Members on a variety of topics from Policy and Legislative changes, contributions to Government consultations, and providing an update on local service provision from partner organisations. They were particularly useful for those issues which were of importance to the Council or partners but were in the early stages of development, or those which would be of interest to Members, out with the usual reporting arrangements.

A programme of seminars was set annually with events planned on a monthly basis. Topics were reviewed monthly by the Corporate Management Team to ensure issues were current and discussions and information provision was timely. Special, additional seminars were arranged as required.

The Policy Seminar programme had been in place since January 2009 and was evaluated in January 2010. The evaluation showed that there was overall a positive response from Members who felt that they provided an opportunity for in depth discussion on a wide range of topics. Feedback was received on the format, acoustics and some of the venue choices. Where possible these issues had been addressed in the programme. A further review was scheduled for July 2012.

There had been one Member Seminar since the last report to Council. The May seminar included two items. The first item was led by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit who spoke to Members about the structure of the unit within Stockton-on-Tees and outlined the Council's and Members' roles in the emergency planning arrangements. The presentation outlined the remit of the emergency planning unit which covered the preparation of emergency plans, the provision of advice for officers and testing out plans to evaluate preparedness. Representatives from the unit asked if Members could complete a copy of a community risk register for their wards and to feed in any contact details they had of individuals who would like to be involved further with this work.

The second item was an update on the review of the children's centres. The presentation summarised the outcomes of the review and discussed the details of the procurement exercise which was undertaken to identify providers for a number of children's centres in the borough. A representative from the Big Life Company (one of the children's centres providers) attended the seminar to outline the key themes and priorities for the children's centres which they had assumed responsibility for. Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask the provider questions about the management of the children's centres they had responsibility for.

All slides, agenda and supporting material from the seminars could be accessed at <http://kyit.stockton.gov.uk/members/policyupdatesessions>

A regular update report on Members seminar events held would be provided to Council at each meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

C
43/12

Motion

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1 moved by Councillor Michael Clark, seconded by Councillor Cook:-

"This Council applauds and supports the campaign to stop the proposed closure of the Insolvency Office in Stockton-on-Tees with the potential loss of 39 jobs and add considerably to the burden of people facing insolvency.

It further notes that the case for closure and re-location to Newcastle is based on a number of demonstrably incorrect or debatable premises, regarding the workload of the office, its overheads and the impact on clients. It believes the proposal will affect the quality of the service and the loss of good quality jobs will impact on the Council's efforts to regenerate the town centre economy.

Council resolves to write to the Insolvency Office making clear its opposition to the proposal and continues to support staff, unions and Stockton North MP Alex Cunningham in their efforts to retain the office. It also calls on the Stockton South MP James Wharton to join the campaign to save the jobs and service for local people."

Councillor Lupton moved and Councillor Laing seconded the following amended motion:-

"Council resolves to write to the Insolvency Office outlining the impact on employees and clients of the closure of this local office and the detrimental effect on the Council's ambition to regenerate the Town Centre economy and ask that they reconsider their decision."

The amended motion was not carried.

Councillor Mrs Rigg moved and Councillor Lewis seconded the following amended motion:-

"This Council applauds and supports the campaign to stop the proposed closure

of the Insolvency Office in Stockton-on-Tees with the potential loss of 39 jobs and add considerably to the burden of people facing insolvency.

It further notes that the case for closure and re-location to Newcastle is based on a number of demonstrably incorrect or debatable premises, regarding the workload of the office, its overheads and the impact on clients. It believes the proposal will affect the quality of the service and the loss of good quality jobs will impact on the Council's efforts to regenerate the town centre economy.

Council resolves to write to the Insolvency Office making clear its opposition to the proposal and continues to support staff, unions, Stockton North MP Alex Cunningham and Fiona Hall MEP in their efforts to retain the office. It also calls on the Stockton South MP James Wharton to join the campaign to save the jobs and service for local people."

The amended motion was carried.

C
44/12

Motion

The following motion was submitted by in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1 moved by Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Beall:-

"Council notes that:-

- energy bills are now one of the biggest cost families and pensioners in Borough of Stockton on Tees face, with the average household now paying £1,345 per year for gas and electricity;
- the complexity of the different products on offer means that 4 in 5 households (a full 80%) are over-paying on their gas or electricity bills;
- the Government has stated it is possible for households to save up to £200 from an annual dual fuel bill by shopping around for the lowest online rate;
- elderly people are at most risk from the threat of fuel poverty, most vulnerable to cold weather and are among those least likely to investigate cheaper tariffs and switch suppliers.

This Council calls on the Government to urge the energy companies to automatically move their more elderly customers – those over 75 - onto the cheapest tariff they offer for their gas and electricity and, if necessary, to legislate to bind energy companies to ensuring every year that their elderly customers are on the lowest available tariff.

The Council agrees to write to both Members of Parliament to ask them to support this motion and to lobby government to take urgent action to this affect."

The motion was carried.

C
45/12

Motion

The following motion was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1 moved by Councillor Beall, seconded by Councillor Mrs McCoy:-

"Council notes that:-

- Smoking tobacco is the leading cause of death and disease, killing one in two long term users, and is responsible for nearly one in five deaths of adults aged over 35, which equates to approximately 290 deaths in Stockton-on-Tees each year - significantly higher than the England average.
- In Stockton-on-Tees, the estimated costs of smoking each year to the NHS is £8million with a further £5million estimated cost to business from sickness and other lost productivity.
- Smoking is an addiction that usually starts in childhood long before it becomes an adult choice. The average starting age for current North East smokers was 15, with many starting earlier. The Stockton on Tees Social Norms project (first year college students) identified that 38% of young smokers started smoking at the age of 14.
- The Government is currently consulting on whether legislation should be introduced for tobacco products to be sold in plain/standardised packaging with a closing date of 10th July for comments.
- 66% of adults within the North East support plain, standardised packaging, with the product name in standard lettering with only 10 per cent of adults opposed.
- There is strong evidence that plain, standardised packs are less attractive, especially to young people, strengthen the impact of health warnings and make packs less misleading to consumers that some brands are safer than others based on colour.
- Shops make six times the gross % profit from selling a local newspaper as they do a pack of cigarettes and would not be at risk from plain packaging.
- A large coalition of organisations is backing plain packaging, including Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Fresh (to which we are affiliated), the Royal College of Physicians and the Faculty of Public Health.

Council resolves:-

- To endorse the response from Stockton Smoke Free Alliance to the current UK government consultation supporting legislation for tobacco products to be sold in standardised packaging in order to protect children and young people from tobacco marketing.
- To continue to promote good public health in our area, to support the reduction of local rates of smoking and to protect children and adults from tobacco harm noting the importance of this commitment in order to reduce health inequalities."

The motion was carried.

C Members' Question Time

46/12

The Director of Law & Democracy informed Members that no Member Questions had been received.

C Forward Plan and Leaders Statement

47/12

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

Firstly the Leader thanked all officers, members and members of the public who had sponsored him for the Middlesbrough 5K run, he finished along with his wife and youngest daughter with a time of 0.39.34 and in the process raised £125 towards the Mayors charities.

- Stockton town centre would benefit from the tremendous news that it is one of just 12 towns in the country to benefit from being a 'Portas Pilot', gaining from the experience of the Mary Portas team and a share in a £1.2m fund.
- The Council had appointed Birse Civils as contractor for works in the High Street and at St John's Crossing.
- The Council had announced a £1m centre for digital businesses in Dovecot Street and the Leader was pleased to confirm the relocation of e-commerce company Visualsoft into the former Council offices at Gloucester House.
- The Council had reached agreement with Stockland Plc on a £2.35m programme of regeneration works for Billingham Town Centre, with work due to begin in the next few weeks on new public toilets.
- The Leader was delighted to say that, following a lengthy legal process, the contractors were actively engaged in the demolition of Billingham House. They were stripping out the interior, pumping out the basement and preparing for removing the structure, which was likely to begin in August 2012.
- Four schools – Ian Ramsey, Grangefield, St Michael's and Mandale Mill – had been successful in gaining a share of the £2bn national Priority School Building Programme, although there was no details of how much they would receive.
- The Leader thanked all staff who worked over the bank holiday weekend to ensure the Beacon events on the river were successful to celebrate the Queens Jubilee which ended with a grand firework display and a colorful light show from Infinity Bridge lighting the bridge in red white and blue.

Significant matters to be considered at the next meeting of Cabinet included:-

- An update of the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre, including details of designs for the central area of the High Street.
- Updates on the housing regeneration schemes of the Victoria Estate and Swainby Road areas.
- A preview of SIRD – the Stockton International Riverside Festival in its 25th year.

- A £17.5m capital investment programme for schools in the Borough.
- Children's Social Care Workload Pressure, Xentrall Annual Report and an updated Employee Code of Conduct.

Also the Leader reported that:-

- The Olympic Torch Relay would arrive in the Borough on Sunday 17th June 2012.
- National Bike Week would take place from June 16 – 24 and people across the Borough were being encouraged to get out and about on two wheels.
- Stockton Cycling Festival would take place from 6 – 8 July.