

# Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 28th October, 2015.

**Present:** The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Ian Dalgarno), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Michael Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Philip Dennis, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Mrs Kathryn Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Stephen Parry, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Rachael Proud, Cllr David Rose, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Andrew Stephenson, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn, Cllr Bill Woodhead and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

**Officers:** N Schneider (CE); J Danks, B Brown, L King (R); P Dobson (DNS); P Kelly (PH); D E Bond, P K Bell, K Wannop, N Hart (LD).

**Also in attendance:** Members of the public.

**Apologies:** Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Mike Smith, Cllr Tracey Stott and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

## **C 56/15 Welcome, Evacuation Procedure and the Recording of the Meeting**

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the procedure for the recording of the meeting.

The evacuation procedure was noted.

## **C 57/15 Mary Butterwick**

Members stood in a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Mary Butterwick.

## **C 58/15 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Sonia Bailey declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Chris Barlow declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of Unison.

Councillor Jim Beall declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of Unison.

Councillor Derrick Brown declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of a trade union.

Councillor Carol Clark declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a retired member of Unison.

Councillor Michael Clark declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a retired member of Unison.

Councillor Bob Cook declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of GMB.

Councillor Evaline Cunningham declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of Unison.

Councillor Kevin Faulks declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a retired member of Blast Furnace ISTC Union and a current member of the Steelworkers Union Community.

Councillor Lisa Grainge declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of a trade union, a member of the regional executive of a trade union and her job role involved delivering training to trade unions.

Councillor David Harrington declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of UNITE and a previous member of Unison and NALGO.

Councillor Di Hewitt declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Barbara Inman declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a retired member of NUT.

Councillor Mohammed Javed declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of GMB.

Councillor Eileen Johnson declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Paul Kirton declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a retired member of GMB.

Councillor Mrs Ann McCoy declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a retired member of GMB.

Councillor Mick Moore declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of a trade union.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of Unison.

Councillor Kathryn Nelson declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of Unison.

Councillor Mrs Jean O'Donnell declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a retired member of UNITE.

Councillor Ross Patterson declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect

of agenda item 10 - Tees Valley Devolution Deal as he was a member of the Yorkshire Society.

Councillor Lauriane Povey declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as She was a member of Durham Student Union.

Councillor Rachael Proud declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Paul Rowling declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Norma Stephenson declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of a trade union and received a financial contribution during the election.

Councillor Mick Stoker declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of UNITE.

Councillor David Wilburn declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a member of UNITE.

Councillor Barry Woodhouse declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as he was a retired member of NASUWT.

Councillor Norma Wilburn declared personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Motion to Council as she was a member of UNITE.

**C**  
**59/15**      **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2015 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

**C**  
**60/15**      **Gold Stray Dog Footprint achieved in the RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Footprint awards (CAWF) 2015**

The Worshipful the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Access, Community and Community Safety presented Michelle Johnson (Animal Welfare Officer) and Robin Hunter (Animal Collections / Enforcement Officer) with the Gold Stray Dog Footprint achieved in the RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Footprint awards (CAWF) 2015.

The aim of the Stray Dog Footprint was to set a level of good practice for stray dog provision by acknowledging local authority services that had clearly defined stray dog policies, good partnership working and proactive programs to encourage responsible dog ownership. With local authority budget tightening continuing it was more important than ever to highlight the vital role played by stray dog and animal welfare services in safeguarding communities.

This reward was recognition of the hard work and commitment that the Animal Welfare Service and contributing partners, Security & Surveillance (out of hours

kennels) and Dogs Trust had to animal welfare and to the stray dogs that came into Council care.

The Animal Welfare Service was located within the Environmental Health Unit of the Council. The Service tackled a wide range of animal related issues ranging from stray animals, welfare concerns, road traffic accidents, dog attacks, micro-chipping, neutering, dog fouling and aimed to promote responsible pet ownership through advice guidance and ultimately formal action.

**C  
61/15**      **Public Question Time**

The following question had been submitted by Mr and Mrs Davies for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:-

“Can you quantify the difference between a successful children's home and one that requires improvement?”

Mr and Mrs Davies were not in attendance and had requested a written response.

The Worshipful the Mayor indicated that Mr and Mrs Davies would be provided with a written response and it would be copied to all Members.

The following question had been submitted by John McGee for response by the Leader of the Council. John McGee was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that his question be read out:-

“Please explain how SOG NE LLP could potentially be impacted by the take-over by Care Tech, i.e. what powers of authority do they have when business decisions are being made?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"There will be no impact on the Joint Venture of the take-over."

The following question had been submitted by Eileen Wiles for response by the Leader of the Council. Eileen Wiles was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that her question be read out:-

“The cost of children's residential care has risen year on year and now the spending is over £15million. As the trend is clearly upward, what is the projection for the next several years?”

Although SBC claim the joint venture with SOG is saving money (I'm not sure how ) SBC have been forced to cut back on spending with job losses and cuts in public services, due to lack of funds.

Can SBC sustain the costs involved in this joint venture?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"The costs of Looked After Children are extremely volatile and costs have increased significantly over recent years. The Council's MTFP includes an estimate of a further £6m over the next 4 years, but the Council is continuing to look at ways of reducing costs in this area."

The following question had been submitted by Peter and Mandy Goring for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:-

"In the council's own words, SOG have an exceptional reputation in the industry. You awarded them the contract to help provide a high level of care to some of the children with more complex needs to allow them to return to the Borough of Stockton. The very fact that Stockton Borough Council have now seconded one of their own managers to support SOG must surely be an indication that SOG have not lived up to your expectations?"

As Peter and Mandy Goring were not in attendance at the meeting and as there had been no instruction from them as to how to deal with the question it was decided not to consider the question.

The following question had been submitted by Mike and Sylvia Renwick for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Mike and Sylvia were not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that their question be read out:-

"The last Ofsted inspection judged the home as Requires Improvement. Any need for improvement in a setting such as this is serious and requires immediate action.

How do the managers of this home know they are making a significant and positive difference to the lives of the young people in their care and how are they evaluating their own performance thereby enhancing their capacity to improve?"

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

"Although the current Ofsted judgement is that Red Plains 'requires improvement', the report stated and it is important to note 'there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their (the children's) welfare not being safeguarded or promoted'.

Senior managers within Spark of Genius conduct their own internal quality inspections of all their children's homes on a quarterly basis which monitor the progress of the home against Ofsted standards with particular emphasis on any issues identified by Ofsted inspections.

As far as Red Plains is concerned, the management team are actively working to implement the improvement plan put in place to respond to the recommendations arising from the Ofsted inspection. An experienced manager from the Council has been seconded to Spark of Genius in order to assist with this.

There is also a monthly visit by an independent person and a six monthly review of the quality of care provided undertaken by the registered manager of Red Plains. These activities evaluate the difference this care has made to the lives of the young people and are both reported to Ofsted.

The Council conduct monitoring visits on all children and young people placed in external children's homes, including Spark of Genius provision. These visits are undertaken by a suitably experienced manager and feedback, including any identified areas for improvement, is shared with the registered manager.

Clearly Ofsted will inspect Red Plains again in due course and will judge the extent to which progress has been made in addressing the issues previously identified but in the meantime the management team will continue to assess the progress being made by the young people, taking into account the feedback received from the young people themselves, parents and social workers.

In order to illustrate this, a young person recently said 'Red Plains feels like my home... I know I am safe there' what more could you ask of a placement for a young child who we don't know what they have experienced in their lives and I think that is so important. But I am also very pleased to say that we had an email from a local resident and I'm a bit disappointed that the lady isn't here as she was going to come to ask a question but in that email she has noted that Red Plains has been considerably quieter lately and I would have liked to thank her for that comment if she had been here."

The following question had been submitted by Mr and Mrs Coulter for response by the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities & Community Safety:-

"1. In respect to the legislation below, do the residents living in the immediate vicinity to Red Plains have the right to peaceful enjoyment of their possessions- including their home? If the answer is yes, has Red Plains impacted on this right given the number of complaints received to date?

Introductory Text of the HRA 1998 Section 6 - Public Authorities. 6 (1) It is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a right under the HRA 1998. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

Schedule 1 Part 1 Article 8- Everyone has the right to have respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. There shall be no interference of this by a public authority...

Schedule 1 Part II Article 1- Protection of Property. Every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. This would include your home. No should be deprived of this...?"

Mr and Mrs Coulter were not in attendance and had requested a written response.

The Worshipful the Mayor indicated that Mr and Mrs Coulter would be provided with an emailed response and it would be copied to all Members.

The following question had been submitted by Mr and Mrs McDonald for response by the Leader of the Council:-

“Given that meetings have taken place between Senior member of Cleveland Police and SBC in 2013 as described in letter from DCC Spittle to Mr Schneider, the subject matter being the provision of bought out child care which is clearly a very serious issue which should be recorded for transparency and responsibility purposes. I would expect that any meetings that took place between the senior people of two professional organisations would generate a minutes of meeting, Could SBC please provide details of what was discussed and conclusions reached or alternatively a copy of the Minutes of Meeting?”

As Mr and Mrs McDonald were not in attendance at the meeting and as there had been no instruction from them as to how to deal with the question it was decided not consider the question.

The following question had been submitted by Christine Jones for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Christine Jones was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that her question be read out:-

“Please cite the evidence that highlights the potential benefits to and opportunities for the "young person" when SOG NE LLP was formed and when considering such benefits and opportunities what were the potential risks and drawbacks for the "young person?”

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

"As set out in the Cabinet report dated 7 March 2013, the basis for the formation of the joint venture partnership with Spark of Genius was that there were increasing numbers of looked after children with complex needs who required 52 week care and education provision.

In order to illustrate this, in 2009/10 there were 20 children costing in the region of £1.8m per annum for care costs. By 2012/13 this had risen to 37 children costing approximately £4.6m per annum. In addition to this, the education costs placed significant pressure on the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

The House of Commons all-party Education Committee published a report into children’s residential care in 2014 which cited a range of evidence that looked after children are safer and achieve better outcomes when they are placed closer to home. At the launch of the report, the Chair Graham Stuart MP stated ‘we are deeply concerned about the number of children being placed in homes far from their own communities and families because of a lack of accommodation nearer to home. This should only happen where it is the right decision to best meet the needs of that child’.

In light of this, it is worth noting that the majority of our looked after children in external placements are placed outside the borough purely because of a lack of suitable provision locally. Although these placements cost the Council significantly more, our experience would show that they do not provide a higher standard of care than our own Council run homes.

The joint venture was therefore based on children returning to their home borough to be cared for and educated locally and bringing them closer to their family and community networks, whilst also achieving a significant financial saving to the Council. The business case was calculated on 20 looked after children returning to the borough at an estimated saving of £400k per annum to the Council (later revised to £600k per annum).

Clearly there are potential risks and drawbacks when any looked after child moves placement or education establishment. The joint venture was based on the level of need at that time but decisions on individual children and young people would always be left to the professionals responsible for overseeing their care and education. There are statutory independent review mechanisms within the local authority which would scrutinise all changes in care and education provision for looked after children and weigh up the potential benefits and any risks or drawbacks associated with a proposed move on a case by case basis. Of course these children also have to be evaluated by the courts because that would be due to their legal status and their care plan.

When we are talking about the benefits there are two things I want to say to Members. I wish you could have all been where I was two Saturdays ago at the Achievement Awards of our younger looked after children. If you had seen the pride in those youngsters when they were called up for their certificates, awards and prizes they were beaming with absolute pride with what they had achieved it was wonderful and I just wish you could have all been there. Secondly I want you to have a look at a copy of this, it is a copy of a Mural that has been produced by our looked after children who is in the family contact centre. Read the words, love, happy, family, kindness. How marvellous is that and if you get the opportunity I would encourage you to go and see what our young looked after children think and can achieve."

The following question had been submitted by Mr and Mrs Daniels for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Mr and Mrs Daniels were not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that their question be read out:-

"How does Stockton Council justify the deletion of all the specialist teachers within the borough whose role is to support the care and education of all our children from disadvantaged backgrounds who have Special Educational Needs or Looked After Children whom are vulnerable to under achievement within our schools?"

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

"There have been substantial reductions in the Grant available to Local Authorities to support schools.

The Education Support Grant has been reduced by over half from £4.6 million to £2.1 million in the past 3 years.

The Council takes very seriously its responsibility for all children particularly those who are vulnerable. To this end I would like to stress there have been no reductions in the funding to the service of special educational need or looked



after children. However, we have as your question refers to had to re-organise services that support schools as there has been a substantial reduction in the National Government Grant to local authorities. The Education Support Grant and Dedicated School Grant have been reduced by over half and we have had to work with schools to work with this.

As a result of the review we now operate with a model where the central group of staff including education psychologist and teaching assistants work with these partnerships with teachers and staff in the schools to ensure children's needs are met. We think this is the best way to use the funds that are available to support the children in the Borough and I think it is another demonstration of our commitment to vulnerable children that we are able to do this with the cuts."

The following question had been submitted by Miss S K Steiner for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:-

"According to page 8 of the Mazars report.

If placement costs are higher than planned or expected, the Council is under no obligation to place children with the LLP and can choose a lower cost alternative. Why if they are in a joint venture would the LLP be more expensive to place a child with? After all the whole idea is to either keep the young person in the Stockton area or they are able to be returned to the area?"

As Miss Steiner was not in attendance at the meeting and as there had been no instruction from her as to how to deal with the question it was decided not to consider the question.

The following question had been submitted by Mr and Mrs Pearson for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Mr and Mrs Pearson were not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that their question be read out:-

"Why did the council use the services of a recruitment agency (see below) for the position of "service manager" and what was the cost of this?"

[https://www.northeastjobs.org.uk/job/Service\\_Manager/141502](https://www.northeastjobs.org.uk/job/Service_Manager/141502)

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

"Well the short answer is no we didn't. What we did do was to use the North East Regional Employers job portal and as people know that is an organisation that is run by local authorities for people in local authorities and I can tell you that we have used the portal for 649 jobs at a cost of £12 per job. You tell me what paper you could get an advert for £12. The estimated cost of savings to this local authority is £97,350."

The following question had been submitted by Claire Bainbridge for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Claire Bainbridge was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that her question be read out:-

"Has Ofsted approval been given to the children's home at The Old Vicarage at Stillington and when will open?"

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

"We are waiting for Ofsted, we have no control over when Ofsted register. Sometimes Ofsted can take 16 weeks, sometimes it can be much longer. So we await their judgement."

The following question had been submitted by Mrs Douglas for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:-

"Why are so many children being removed from the facility? Surely if it is being run properly, for the benefit for the children then the expertise should be there to support those children rather than the upheaval and insecurity of being moved again. I would suggest this reflects the inadequate expertise and care offered in the home?"

As Mrs Douglas was not in attendance at the meeting and as there had been no instruction from her as to how to deal with the question it was decided not to consider the question.

The following question had been submitted by Barbara Dobson for response by the Leader of the Council. Barbara Dobson was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that her question be read out:-

"Will Stockton Council be following the guidance set out in the Mazars report when purchasing the fourth property for SOG NE LLP i.e in a clear and transparent manner?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"There was no specific recommendation or guidance around the purchase of the properties in the Mazars report. We have of course implemented the recommendations in the report."

The following question had been submitted by Joyce Edwards for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Joyce Edwards was not in attendance at the meeting but had requested that her question be read out:-

"Should local residents living in the vicinity of the children's homes in Thorpe Thewles and Hartburn be unusually worried about the police visits that have not been part of the standard protocol for missing or absent children?"

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

"Spark of Genius and Council officers monitor and review all contact with the police associated with children's homes in Thorpe Thewles and Hartburn. Having considered all the reasons for all these police visits it is not considered

that any local residents should be unusually worried.

Police reports have reduced and I think we should all be re-assured that the staff have still got the confidence to actually continue to comply with their duty to report and haven't been frightened off by that the figures may be used against them and they still report to the police. I have to say that we have the confidence in Cleveland Police to clearly take children's safety as a priority.

And finally I would like to say this, all children are precious when born, they deserve and should have the right to a happy and safe fulfilled life unfortunately some children and young people don't have that so when they come into our care for many different reasons and through no fault of their own I believe passionately we should do whatever we can to make them feel cared for, valued and wanted and that we believe they can be whatever they want to be and become valuable members of the community.

Some children and young people find this more difficult than others but that doesn't mean we give up on them. We need to be more compassionate, more understanding and more tolerant to help them become the citizens we know they can be. When I sign the Corporate Parenting Pledge every year that is what the pledge means to me."

## **C 62/15    Localism Act 2011 – Review of the Council's Local Standards Arrangements**

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of the latest review of the Council's local standards arrangements.

The Council agreed new standards arrangements, as required by the Localism Act 2011, on 7 March 2012.

Subsequently, Council agreed a new code of conduct for Members on 18 July 2012.

Council agreed that these new arrangements should be reviewed after 12 months of operation.

A review was undertaken, and was the subject of a report to Cabinet and to Council in September 2013. One of the report's recommendations that was agreed by Council was that a further review of the standards arrangements should take place after a further 12 months operation, and that the outcome with any recommendations, should be reported to the Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council.

Details of the most recent review of the Council's standards arrangements were attached to the report.

Members were asked to consider the review report, and subject to such consideration, to recommend it to Council along with the recommendations specified within the covering report.

The Audit Committee considered a similar report at its meeting on the 28 September.

RESOLVED that:-

1. No changes be made to the principles of conduct or the Council's code of conduct for Members;
2. Awareness continues to be maintained, and that appropriate advice, guidance and training continues to be provided, in connection with the general principles and the code;
3. The Council's Confidential Information protocol be re-issued and re-circulated to all Members, in order to highlight the arrangements and requirements regarding exempt and confidential information;
4. Copies of the letters (about standards of conduct) previously sent to the Planning Committee be re-circulated to all Members of the Council;
5. Members continue to be reminded of the importance of complying with the law, and the significant risk of not doing so, when using social media, or any other forms of electronic communication.
6. The arrangements for dealing with member misconduct complaints remain unchanged, and as originally approved by Council;
7. All Council Members take appropriate action to ensure that their register of interests details have been submitted and are kept up to date;
8. Regular reminders, advice and guidance continue to be provided to Stockton's Members and to the members of the borough's Town/Parish Councils, regarding the need to submit and keep their registerable interests up to date;
9. The procedures relating to the disclosures of interests at, and withdrawal from the Council's meetings be reaffirmed;
10. Appropriate and timely advice regarding those procedures be made available to all members when required;
11. The documentation (protocol and application form) and procedure regarding dispensation applications and determinations be reaffirmed and re-circulated to all Members;
12. Guidance and/or briefings regarding any aspects of the Council's standards arrangements be provided to individual Members or their Groups if required, on request;
13. The guidance for Members regarding gifts and hospitality be reviewed and re-circulated; and that
14. The Council's standards arrangements be reviewed again during the 2017/18 municipal year.

## Children and Young People's plan 2015 - 18

Consideration was given to a report on the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 18.

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) had been developed by the Children and Young People's Partnership in order to give clear strategic direction to the Council and partner agencies in their work to develop provision and improve outcomes for children and young people in Stockton-on-Tees.

The plan set out the key priorities over the 2015-18 period, how these had been identified, and how progress towards improved outcomes would be monitored. It formed a key part of the Council's agreed policy framework and of the Health & Wellbeing Board's governance framework.

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) had been developed by the Children and Young People's Partnership which was established following a review of partnership structures within the overall remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board, as approved by Cabinet in July 2014.

The Children and Young People's Partnership was a multi-agency forum with senior representatives from member organisations. The agreed terms of reference for the Partnership stated its aim as follows:-

"The Children & Young People's Partnership ('the Partnership') will provide strategic leadership and support to ensure healthy, happy and safe children and young people who are able to maximise their potential and are protected from harm. It will ensure this for all children and young people; and particularly for the most vulnerable children and young people.

The Partnership will support the vision of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to protect our children and young people; to improve and protect their health and wellbeing; and to reduce inequality."

The terms of reference for the Partnership included the following objective:

"Produce and monitor the implementation of a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and outcomes-based action plan, identifying strategic priorities for children and young people based on a robust assessment of need and evidence-based practice and other key multi-agency strategies e.g. the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-18."

Accordingly, the Children & Young People's Plan had been developed by the Partnership as a means of giving clear strategic direction to the work of the Council and partner agencies in the ambition to make Stockton-on-Tees an excellent place for children and young people to grow up in, particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable to poor outcomes.

The plan had been developed as a reasonably brief, strategic document, focused on providing clarity about the Partnership's priorities, the rationale for these, and the way in which the Partnership would monitor delivery and achievement of actions required to achieve priorities. The plan had taken

account of a wide range of evidence, for example: needs assessments; performance data; learning from reviews and inspections; listening to the views of children and young people. It had taken account of discussion with the Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Children & Young People Partnership would monitor delivery of the CYPP and would report on progress in line with the agreed performance frameworks of the Health & Wellbeing Board and Council.

Once the plan was approved, work would take place for the document to be formatted in an appropriate style for publication via the Council's website.

RESOLVED that the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 18 be approved.

## **C**      **Tees Valley Devolution Deal**

**64/15**

Consideration was given to a report that sought the Council's approval to formally sign up to a Devolution Deal with HM Government, on which the five Tees Valley authorities had negotiated hard to arrive at a deal worth £450m over 30 years.

This Devolution Deal was a set of resources and powers, to be devolved down from Government to the Tees Valley Combined Authority, due to be established from 1 April 2016. This was in return for developing a new governance model in the form of an elected Mayor for the Tees Valley which would follow subject to legislation going through Parliament.

As part of a 'Fast Track' Deal with Government, Tees Valley Leaders and Elected Mayor had signed an agreement in principle with Government. Members were asked to formally approve the Deal. This request was being made of all five Tees Valley Councils.

If agreed by each of the five councils, further detailed negotiations would take place with Government in the coming months to make the Deal happen.

A copy of the Deal was attached to the report.

In July 2015, the five Leaders / Elected Mayor that comprised the Shadow Tees Valley Combined Authority, working together with business through the Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP), were invited by Government to submit proposals for a Devolution Deal for the Tees Valley. What followed had been a fast-track process that put the Tees Valley in the first wave of new Deals, shaping the agenda and influencing Government's resource allocation ahead of the Spending Review announcement in November 2015, when Government departmental budgets would be set for the rest of this Parliament. The proposals, "Tees Valley Powerhouse Plan" were submitted to Government on 4 September. Since then, there had been intense, detailed negotiations with Government to arrive at the Deal.

Tees Valley, the area covered by the local authorities of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees, shared a coherent economic identity and a history of highly effective collaboration.

Tees Valley was one of the most significant integrated industrial economies in the UK. It was home to England's third largest port and produced some 30% of the UK's process output. With a positive balance of trade and GVA worth £11.4 billion to the UK economy, the Tees Valley was a key ingredient in the nation's future growth and prosperity.

In Tees Valley Unlimited, the innovative Local Enterprise Partnership, a mature and robust partnership had been established, a ten year proven track record of delivery and willingness to collaborate for the benefit of the combined community. Following a public consultation earlier in the year, the Tees Valley was on track to establish a Tees Valley Combined Authority in April 2016.

The devolution proposal built on that background and on the City and Growth deals already agreed with Government to take the economic growth to a new level.

The vision was that Tees Valley was an area with:-

- Rapid and sustainable local economic growth to benefit Tees Valley and the whole of the UK, with a full role in the Northern Powerhouse;
- Improved life chances and opportunities for communities so that local people directly benefit through improved prosperity and wellbeing; and
- Real strength and vibrancy as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

The Tees Valley local authorities worked very well together in the Tees Valley and had made some good progress. The Tees Valley had secured significant external fund through Tees Valley Unlimited and the Tees Valley had a good track record in using those funds to create jobs. For example:-

- £104m of Local Growth Funding was creating 5,000 jobs and 1,500 new homes;
- City Deal was creating 3,500 jobs and £10m of investment;
- £6m of Government investment in the Tees Valley Jobs and Investment Scheme had created over 700 jobs in just 18 months;
- In total, 11,000 private sector jobs had been created in Tees Valley since 2011.

There was, however, much more to be done to diversify and strengthen the Tees Valley economy and make it more resilient to external shocks, such as the recent announcement about SSI and steel. The Devolution Deal would help us to accelerate jobs growth.

The devolution deal would bring £450m of additional money into the Tees Valley over the next 30 years and take decision-making powers away from Whitehall and into the area. The deal was focused on driving economic growth, accelerating delivery of the 25,000 new jobs as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan, and creating up to 14,000 additional new jobs. Final agreement depended on the support of each of the five local authorities (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Stockton). The report contained a summary that described what the deal would mean to the Tees Valley and more

detailed analysis was attached to the report.

At its meeting on the 8 October 2015 Cabinet considered this matter and a copy of the relevant minute extract was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Devolution Deal be agreed which amongst other benefits brings an additional £450m to the area over 30 years.
2. Any final amendments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**C  
65/15**

### **Amendments to Committee Membership 2015/19**

At its Annual Meeting, held on Wednesday 3rd June 2015, the Council approved appointments to its Committees, Panels and Joint/Outside Bodies for 2015/19.

The following change was presented for Council approval:-

Children and Young People Select Committee

Remove - Councillor Ian Dalgarno  
Add - Councillor Sylvia Walmsley

RESOLVED that the following amendment be approved:-

Children and Young People Select Committee

Remove - Councillor Ian Dalgarno  
Add - Councillor Sylvia Walmsley

**C  
66/15**

### **Motion**

To consider the following motion which had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1 by Councillor Proud:-

“This Council condemns the plans that the Conservative Government have outlined in the Trade Union Bill.

We believe this Bill is unfair, unnecessary, undemocratic and socially divisive. It is an attack on democracy and if passed will attack the civil liberties of our employees.

We have a longstanding, meaningful relationship with our recognised trade unions and believe that this Bill will undermine the positive industrial relations that we have worked hard to achieve.

This Council values the positive relationship it holds with trade unions and acknowledges their role in maintaining harmonious industrial relations. This is particularly important in these times of reducing budgets and the need to



co-operate to achieve them, not least through unavoidable job losses. Consequently, this Council opposes the measures contained in the Trade Union Bill currently before Parliament which attack the fundamental rights of our workforce and the capacity for good industrial relations.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the Councils opposition to the Governments proposals
- Write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and James Wharton, Northern Powerhouse Minister stating our opposition to the interference of Central Government in local industrial relations as this is against the spirit of localism
- Write to MPs and the LGA stating our opposition to this Bill
- Continue to value the importance of meaningful workplace relationships and engagement with recognised trade unions and their representatives

In the event that this Bill becomes law, in so far as it is lawful, Stockton Council proposes to:

- Continue to deduct trade union membership payments from union members' salaries where consent has been provided or support the recognised trade unions in setting up direct debit arrangements with employees who are trade union members
- Not to hire agency workers to replace employees participating in industrial action
- To continue to work in Partnership with recognised trade union reps by agreeing to reasonable requests for facility time for them to represent their members."

The motion was debated and it was moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Dennis that a recorded vote take place. As this was not supported by at least a quarter of those Members present a recorded vote did not take place.

A vote took place and the motion was carried.

## **C 67/15**      **Members' Question Time**

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Houghton for response by the Leader of the Council:-

"Abbeyfield House in Eaglescliffe is a former care home which has a restrictive covenant on the building, which states that it must be used for over 55's accommodation only. Recently, Stockton Council have told me that the property owners would like the restriction lifted, despite not making their intentions for the building clear. This kind of ambiguity is concerning. Therefore, I would be grateful if a cabinet member will tell me whether the council will demand that the owner reveal their intentions, and allow local residents the chance to be consulted before the covenant is potentially lifted?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"A request to lift the covenant in respect of the occupation of Abbeyfield House has been received and ward members were consulted at that time. The Council has requested details of the proposed use of the property but has not received a

reply. In circumstances such as these, where the control of use of the property is sensitive due to being, for example, next to a school, the council will require confirmation of the proposed use before considering lifting or varying the covenant. In accordance with our usual practice if details are received ward councillors will be re-consulted before any such decision is made.”

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Hall for response by the Leader of the Council:-

“The reduced number of children living in Red Plains since March means it is running at a loss; when is it foreseen that this will change and are we going to tighten up on ‘the strict selection procedures’ recommended by the Police to avoid children being put in an unsuitable placement for their needs?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"The financial position associated with Red Plains is accounted for by the Joint Venture and not the Council.

A decision has been taken jointly between Spark of Genius and the Council that no more than three young people should be placed in Red Plains (the capacity is five) until we are confident that the home is capable of fully meeting their needs.

Up until recently there were three young people placed in Red Plains. One of these young people has now moved to another placement and a matching process is currently underway in order to identify a suitable young person to move into Red Plains.

This involves Council officers identifying any potentially suitable young people for the vacancy and discussing these young people with Spark of Genius managers. The registered manager of the home will ultimately consider all the available information in relation to each young person, their needs and the likely impact of the move on the young person themselves and any other young people already in placement. Once this information has been analysed and assessed, a final decision will be made regarding the offer of a placement."

Councillor Hall asked the following supplementary question:-

"Thank you, we do now know that there are two children in the home with the potential of three.

All across the parties I think we want if possible to bring our looked after and cared for children home but not at any cost.

I focussed on the cost as well the quality of care and the suitability of placements. I was however disappointed that the Cabinet Member for Children Services didn't attend the Hartburn Residents meeting when there were clear concerns.

I think this was one of the reasons why individuals tried to bring the meetings' concerns here to full Council. Unfortunately statements were made which were

misleading to the press following last Council. The trend of police involvement was on the increase and therefore those statements were quite misleading, however I'm pleased to report there has been an improvement in anti-social behaviour experienced by residents in the last 3 weeks.

How many children have left or been removed since the home opened on 9th March? And did the recent review of the joint venture board, high turnover of staff and no doubt considering the impact of this on young people in our care, was it considered this home was in the wrong location?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"I can't answer how many have been removed since it opened. Obviously Councillor Mrs McCoy has just answered, it is 3.

I don't think it is in the wrong location. There is nothing wrong with the location, it is in Stockton and that is the right location."

## **C 68/15 Forward Plan and Leader's Statement**

The Leader of the Council announced that due to personal reasons Councillor David Rose had tendered his resignation from the Cabinet. Reluctantly the Leader of the Council had accepted his resignation. The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Rose for the work he had done over the last four years, it had been a pleasure working with him.

The Leader of the Council therefore needed to announce Councillor Rose's replacement which was Councillor Nigel Cooke who had gained experience in the Environmental Select Committee and was Chair of the Place Select Committee, Councillor Cooke would take over Councillor Rose's portfolio of Regeneration and Transport.

Cabinet had met on the 8th October and considered reports on:

- The 2014 Care Act
- The Children & Young People's Plan 2015 - 2018
- School Performance and Pupil Attainment data regarding vulnerable pupils
- An update on Children's Social Care performance and activity
- A Tees Valley Culture Task and Finish Group report
- A Review of the Council's Local Standards Arrangements under the Localism Act 2011
- The Scrutiny Review of Choice Based Lettings

And,

- The Tees Valley devolution deal

Looking ahead, Cabinet next meets on the 12th November and was scheduled to consider reports on:

- The School Organisation Plan
- An update on the Asset Review, School Capital and Site Disposal
- The annual DCS / DASS Assurance Statement
- An update on the Employee Survey 2014

- The Playing Pitch Strategy
  - A Review of the Council's Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy
  - A Review of the Council's Sex Establishment Licensing Policy
  - The Economic Climate Report
- And,
- The North East Rail Management Unit Collaboration Agreement and Rail North Update

On other matters, there was a lot going on across the borough over the next month with the ever popular Halloween Walk at Preston Park and the spectacular fireworks at the Riverside. Remembrance Sunday services would be taking place across the Borough on the 8th November and there would be a Diwali celebration on the 18th November with the Festival of Light and Colour at the Infinity Bridge.

The Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing Members again at the next Council meeting on the 25th November.