

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 25th January, 2017.

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

Officers: Neil Schneider (CE) Julie Danks, Kirsty Wannop, Jenna McDonald (DCE), Martin Gray (CHS), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH); David Bond (Proper Officer), Richard McGuckin (EGDS), Reuben Kench (CL&E).

Also in attendance: Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Kathryn Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Rachael Proud, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

C 89/16 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 also noted.

C 90/16 Councillor Sylvia Walmsley

Members agreed that on behalf of the Council the Worshipful the Mayor would send Councillor Sylvia Walmsley best wishes.

C 91/16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Consolidation of the Thirteen Housing Group as he was a Director of Tristar Homes. Councillor Steve Nelson did not speak or vote on the item.

Councillor Norma Stephenson declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Consolidation of the Thirteen Housing Group as she was a Director of Tristar Homes. Councillor Norma Stephenson did not speak or vote on the item.

Councillor Paul Rowling declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Consolidation of the Thirteen Housing Group as he was a Director of Tristar Homes. Councillor Paul Rowling did not speak or vote on the item.

C 92/16 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 be signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

**C
93/16** **Former Councillor Liz Fleming and former Councillor Ray McCall**

Members stood in a minute's silence as a mark of respect for former Councillor Ray McCall and former Councillor Liz Fleming.

**C
94/16** **Public Question Time**

The Proper Officer informed Members that no Public Questions had been received.

**C
95/16** **Amendments and Appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies and Panels for 2016/19**

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

The following amendments and nominations were proposed and presented for Council consideration:-

Executive Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Gillian Corr be appointed Interim Vice-Chair in the absence of the substantive Vice-Chair (Councillor Sylvia Walmsley).

Councillor Phil Dennis be appointed Interim Vice-Chair in the absence of the substantive Vice-Chair (Councillor Sylvia Walmsley).

A vote took place and it was agreed that Councillor Gillian Corr be appointed Interim Vice-Chair in the absence of the substantive Vice-Chair (Councillor Sylvia Walmsley).

Housing, Neighbourhood and Affordable Warmth Partnership

2 Members required and the following nominations were proposed:-

Councillor Sonia Bailey
Councillor Di Hewitt

RESOLVED that the above nominations / amendments be agreed.

**C
96/16** **Consolidation of the Thirteen Housing Group**

Consideration was given to a report on the consolidation of the Thirteen Housing Group.

The Thirteen Group was created in April 2014 following the merger of two locally based housing groups (Vela and Fabrick). Within the existing Thirteen Group structure there were four subsidiary registered provider landlords including Tristar Homes Limited.

Since the establishment of Vela and Thirteen, £50m had been invested into the borough through property improvement / investment and the delivery of much need new affordable homes. However over recent years the operating environment for all Registered Housing Providers had changed significantly, in order to deliver savings and greater efficiencies Thirteen therefore proposed to consolidate its group structure to create one landlord. The new landlord would retain the name Thirteen and would own and manage the Groups services and 34,000 properties. In order to progress with group consolidation Thirteen sought the Council's consent to change Tristar Homes Limited (THL) Articles of Association. This would then enable THL to transfer its engagements (assets and liabilities) to Thirteen and for THL then to be dissolved.

The plans and significant forward investment programme for the organisation included:

- This financial year a further £14.4m
- Between 2017/18 to 2021/22 £41m to be invested in properties and neighbourhoods improvements.
- Over the next 3 years the delivery of 145 new homes in the borough (95 affordable rent and 50 for intermediate homeownership).

In addition active discussions would commence with the Council to develop a Strategic Plan which would align Thirteen's investment ambitions with the Council's priorities to maximise impact and to explore joint venture opportunities.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The necessary changes to the THL Articles of Association which would enable the Thirteen Group consolidation to take place (as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report) be agreed.
2. The Chief Executive be authorised to nominate a representative to exercise the Council's vote at any General Meeting of THL and for this representative to vote in favour of:
 - (i) THL converting to become a community benefit society.
 - (ii) THL transferring its engagements (assets and liabilities) to the Thirteen Group.
3. A referral be made to Scrutiny Liaison Forum / Executive Scrutiny Committee proposing that a scrutiny review of the new arrangements takes place after a period of 12 months.

**C
97/16**

Motion

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1. The motion was moved by Councillor Barry Woodhouse, seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann McCoy:-

"The Government sponsored transformation and privatisation of the Post Office through branch closures and the franchising out of services is proving to be extremely damaging and is severely undermining its ability to serve the needs of customers. A notable consequence of the transformation program has been poorer access to Post Offices for the elderly and disabled customers.

With the cost cutting measures we are seeing, it is clear that the Post Office is in crisis.

They are seeking to privatise and close 100 Crown Post Offices across the U.K. This involves closing the Branches and finding a retailer to take a Post Office counter as an add on to its business instead.

This Council therefore calls for an immediate halt to the closure and franchise programme and for the government to develop a new strategy with the introduction of a national Post Bank through the Post Office network."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 Councillor Woodhouse requested that a recorded vote be taken; which was supported by at least a quarter of the members present:-

For the motion:-

Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Allan Mitchell, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Stephen Parry, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Against the motion:-

Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Elsie Hampton, Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Andrew Stephenson, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Bill Woodhead.

The motion was carried.

C
98/16 **Members' Question Time**

The Proper Officer informed Members that no Member Questions had been received.

C
99/16 **Forward Plan and Leader's Statement**

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

Since Council last met in December, Cabinet met on the 19th of January and

considered reports on:

- The Scrutiny Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School
- The Scrutiny Review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- The Scrutiny Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement
- The Scrutiny Review of Flooding Resilience
- The commissioning of short term housing related support services
- The review of Special Education Needs and Disabilities Provision
- Options for the Council in responding to the loss of the Education Services Grant from September 2017
- Consideration of the 2016 Annual Audit Letter
- An update on Electoral Registration
- The Medium Term Financial Plan
- An update on ECO external wall installation and health evaluation

And,

- The Thirteen Housing Group Consolidation

Cabinet would meet twice before the next meeting of Council on the 22nd of February.

Cabinet would next meet on the 9th of February when the following reports would be considered:

- The Care Act Policy Review Update
- An update on the delivery of probation services in the borough.
- The 2017-2020 Council Plan
- The 2016 Employee Survey
- Assistant Cabinet Members
- School Admission Arrangements for 2018 – 2019
- The Stockton-on-Tees Economic Strategy 2016 – 2031
- The Economic Climate Report

Cabinet would then meet again on the 16th February to consider reports on the new hotel and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

After that the Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing Members at the next meeting of Council on the 22nd of February 2017.