

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 31st January, 2018.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Maurice Perry); Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Julia Cherrett, 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 John Gardner, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Kathryn Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, 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 Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Neil Schneider (CE), Julie Danks, Peter Bell, Jenna McDonald (DCE), Beccy Brown, Jonathan Nertney (HR, L&C), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Richard McGuckin (E,G&D), Jamie McCann (CS), Sarah Bowman-Abouna (AH); Reuben Kench (CL&E).

Also in attendance: Marie Smailes and Guests.
Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Elsie Hampton, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

C Welcome, Evacuation and Recording of the Meeting 103/17

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted. It was also noted that the Governance Officer would be making an audio recording of the meeting to assist in the drafting of minutes of the meeting.

C Declarations of Interest 104/17

There were no interests declared.

C Minutes 105/17

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 December 2017 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C Presentation of Posthumous Honorary Alderman Status to Stephen 106/17 Smailes

It gave the Worshipful the Mayor great pleasure to confer the posthumous title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Stephen Smailes who had given many years' service to the Borough.

Marie Smailes was in attendance at the meeting and was called forward and signed the Honorary Alderman Roll and received the Alderman Medal, with a framed certificate.

The Worshipful the Mayor and the Chief Executive witnessed each declaration and added their signature to the Honorary Alderman Roll.

C Public Question Time 107/17

The Chief Solicitor informed Members that no Public Questions had been received.

C
108/17 **Motion**

To consider the following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1. The motion was moved by Councillor Di Hewitt and seconded by Councillor Louise Baldock:-

“There is a rise in the use of food banks across the country, this is linked to welfare reform and the roll out of Universal Credit. The Trussell Trust report that many people are having to choose between buying food or fuel. We know that welfare reform is affecting many people, including people in work and low paid jobs. Austerity is affecting women more and therefore period poverty is a reality and forces many women to choose between putting food on the table and buying sanitary products. This affects both adult women and girls, in a recent survey by Plan International UK, it was found that 10% of 14-24 year olds surveyed had been unable to buy sanitary products and there are girls missing out on their education because they cannot afford sanitary protection. Women and girls do not have a choice whether to have a period or not. For a family where there is a mother and two daughters who have periods, the average cost per month of buying sanitary products is £20. Where women cannot afford sanitary products they are using socks, toilet roll and napkins from fast food restaurants.

Scotland are leading the way and piloting a scheme in Aberdeen, where women can have an S-Card, similar to the C-Card scheme for condoms. The S-card enables a woman to go into a pharmacy and exchange for free sanitary products. Some food banks and community hubs may have sanitary products women can access but these are not open seven days a week. There needs to be a system where women in need can easily access free sanitary products to meet a basic need, maintain dignity and hygiene.

This Council believes:

- that no woman in the Tees Valley should be forced into poverty due to her periods.
- no girl should miss school because of her period
- no woman should miss work or college because of her period:

Stockton Borough Council commits to:

1. To complete a feasibility study into (a) providing sanitary products in schools and colleges and (b) products in mainstream providers such as chemists for targeted groups of women who cannot afford to buy them. This may be a referral system like way people are referred to foodbanks.
2. To write to the relevant Secretary of State to request financial help to alleviate period poverty using the money raised through the tax on sanitary products.
3. To set up pilot areas in the most deprived wards in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham.”

Moved by Councillor Matthew Vickers, seconded by Councillor Tony Hampton that the motion be amended as follows:-

“The Scrutiny Committee be asked to undertake a review of the issues relating to access of sanitary products in schools and colleges, and for those suffering deprivation and as part of that review the Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider making the following recommendations:-

1. To complete a feasibility study into (a) providing sanitary products in schools and colleges and (b) products in mainstream providers such as chemists for targeted groups of women who cannot afford to buy them. This may be a referral system like the way people are referred to foodbanks.
2. To write to the relevant Secretary of State to request financial help to alleviate period poverty using money raised through the tax on sanitary products.
3. To set up pilot areas in the most deprived wards in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham.

A vote then took place on the amendment to the motion.

The amendment to the motion was not carried.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 Councillor Di Hewitt requested that a recorded vote be taken on the substantive motion; 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 Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Julia Cherrett, 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 Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Kathryn Nelson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Against the motion:-

Cllr Andrew Stephenson.

Abstentions:-

Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Matthew Vickers and Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE.

The motion was carried.

C **Members' Question Time** **109/17**

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

“Would the Leader please clarify what exposure the Council has by way of contracts with Carillion, and if he can also advise on any impact across the Borough in schools, hospitals and any local businesses who might inadvertently be caught up in this scandal?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“May I first of all pass on my best wishes and hopes to the tens of thousands of employees and their families who now face a very uncertain future. That’s not just the 20,000 or more Carillion UK employees but the many more who work for companies associated with them. I’m advised that more than 30,000 small/medium businesses could be affected by the collapse, as well as a number of the large construction companies. Here in the Tees Valley, Job Centre Plus data suggests that almost 1800 people are employed by Carillion. You may have seen the coverage in the press around James Cook University Hospital for example.

To answer your question Councillor Harrington, we at the Council had the good management, or should I say good judgement, not to have entered any contracts with the company directly. Our only connection is via our apprenticeship scheme, 3 apprentices were undertaking their training with Carillion Training Limited, but they have already found placements with a new training provider.

In terms of the impact across the Borough in schools, hospitals and local businesses, we have carried out a survey to understand the impact and can advise that it is minimal, however, it may take several months to fully understand the picture as insolvency measures progress and public/private sector contracts are assigned or re-tendered. Our Business & Enterprise Team remain on hand to sign post any affected businesses and to provide practical support. We have also established contact with neighbouring Councils on this issue as well as the Combined Authority, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber of Commerce, with a view to sharing data and monitoring the situation in the coming weeks.

The Council hasn’t had a history of supporting large scale outsourcing. Those of you who have been around as long as I have will remember our experience of the compulsory competitive tendering (another Conservative initiative) of our grounds maintenance service where we experience numerous issues and had to bring back in-house after only 10 years. We instead choose to contract and partner on a tactical basis, the community rehabilitation company with other public sector providers and the home care community interest company with Five Lamps are prime examples as well, of course, as our public/public partnership Xentrall Shared Service delivering back office services with Darlington Council, which has delivered more than £13m savings since it was established and supported both Councils in the delivery of their agendas in very difficult circumstances. All great examples of the approach we’ve taken.

Going back to Carillion we are lucky to experience such low impact; I’m sure you agree. It would appear they became too big and lost sight of risk in the process. The National Audit Office only a few years ago raised alarm bells that these companies were becoming “too big to fail”, the devastation we’re seeing

across the country is unfortunately illustrating this only too clearly. And yet the Government continued. Carillion, as we know, were not the only outsourced contract to experience problems. I'm sure we all remember of course G4S. But we're here again, thousands of employees facing unemployment and not only that but uncertainty over their pensions with a reported pension fund gap of £587m. The public purse will need to step in yet again – I'd have thought it is time the Government saw the error of its ways and stopped this dogmatic concentration on large-scale outsourcing it just doesn't work."

Councillor David Harrington asked the following supplementary question:-

"Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that this latest scandal and what appears to be an increasingly long list of examples is further evidence of a failed and expensive philosophy of outsourcing public services to the private sector without adequate safeguards is a disgrace?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"Yes."

C Forward Plan and Leader's Statement 110/17

The Leader of the council gave his Forward Plan and Leader's Statement.

It had been a busy start to the year. Cabinet had met last on the 25th January and considered reports on:

- The Tees Valley Adoption Agency
- The Economic Climate report
- The 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act
- Proposals on Fines for Fly-tipping

And,

- An update on the Compact with the VCSE Sector

Cabinet would next meet on the 15th February to consider reports on:

- The 2018-21 Council Plan
- TVCA Borrowing Regulations
- The Annual Review of the Council Constitution
- The Scrutiny Review of Billingham Event Infrastructure
- Children's Services 3rd Quarter Performance Update
- The Early Years Assessment and Moderation Toolkit
- The Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary

Schools in September 2019

And,

- The Stockton Riverside College Annual Update

Cabinet would then meet again on the 22nd of February to consider 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 28th of February.

