

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Thursday, 20th September, 2018.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Eileen Johnson); Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Paul Kirton, 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 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 Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Julia Whitehill, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Norma Wilburn, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks, Peter Bell (DCE), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Julie Butcher (HR, L&C), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Richard McGuckin (E,G&D), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH); Reuben Kench (CL&E).

Also in attendance: Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Elsie Hampton, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Tracey Stott and Cllr Laura Tunney.

C 23/18 Welcome, Evacuation and Recording of the Meeting

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 24/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

C 25/18 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2018 were signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

C 26/18 Armed Forces Week

It gave the Worshipful the Mayor great pleasure to welcome representatives from the Freedom Regiments: The Rifles, The Yorkshire Regiment and 1st Close Support Battalion REME.

The region had a proud military heritage, which included supporting veterans, cadets and serving military personnel, and the Council continued that support through its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Since 2011 the Mayor of the Borough had organised events and activities during Armed Forces Week to honour past and present members of the armed forces. It also provided opportunities for residents of the borough to come and meet with members of the armed forces, civilian support services and cadets.

As part of the Armed Forces Week activities, the Council raised much needed funds for the Freedom Regiments through the 'Mayor's Charity Duck Race'. The total raised from this year's duck race was £ 1216, giving a total £ 405 to each

of the regiments.

The Worshipful the Mayor presented the following representatives from the Freedom Regiments with their cheques:-

Major Chris Lawton, The Rifles Regiment.

Major Pat Ralph, The Yorkshire Regiment.

RSM Steve Goose, 1st Close Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

C
27/18 **RSPCA PawPrints Award**

The Worshipful the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety presented Steve Donaghy, Alison Worthington, Derek Hall and Michelle Johnson with the RSPCA PawPrints Award. The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety on behalf of all Members thanked all the staff involved in this front line services for their professionalism and dedication.

C
28/18 **Public Question Time**

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

C
29/18 **Review of Alderman Criteria**

Consideration was given to a report on the criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Aldermen and comment on whether it was still fit for purpose.

The criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Aldermen was last reviewed by Council in November 2013 (Min C75/13 refers) following proposals submitted by the Members Advisory Panel (MAP) which specifically addressed whether the criteria in place at that time was appropriate.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, for the title to be conferred, not less than two thirds of Members voting must agree at a Council meeting specially convened for the purpose of doing so.

The criteria in place prior to 2013 was that when considering whether it was appropriate to confer the title of Alderman on a former Councillor, their 'reckonable service' as a Councillor should be taken into account.

Reckonable service for the purpose of conferring this title had been established as being at least 20 years; or alternatively 15 years with relevant Councils including holding a senior office over a long period. It had also been practice not to count service with the former Cleveland County Council where that service was contemporaneous with service with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council or its predecessor authorities.

At the time of the last review in 2013, MAP were specifically asked:-

- if the 20 year period (without holding a senior office) should be changed.

- whether 15 years (including holding a senior office) was appropriate over a long period.
- if senior office should be defined e.g. holding an office which attracts a special responsibility allowance.
- whether a long period for holding such an office should also be defined e.g. 8 years.

MAP subsequently agreed that the criteria should be revised and Cabinet/Council ultimately agreed their recommendations as follows:-

- That any Councillor who had an appropriate length of service, whether or not including holding a senior office with the Council, should qualify for consideration.
- That an appropriate length of service should be 12 years, which equated to three election terms, and that this should be the only criterion taken into consideration.

Following the decision of Council to review the criterion for conferring Alderman status to that set out at paragraph 6, the honour had been bestowed on 20 former Councillors.

MAP at its meeting held on 4th May 2018, were invited to consider the criteria once again and determine whether it was still fit for purpose.

It was the view of the Panel that the length of service (12 years) was too short and that it would be more appropriate for it to be extended to 16 years.

MAP were also keen to ensure that any nominations put forward by groups were merited and took into account factors such as the nominees previous attendance at Council / Committee meetings and / or contribution they had made to the Council. It would therefore be incumbent upon political groups nominating to ensure that their nominations merited consideration based on these factors prior to submission.

MAP therefore recommended to Cabinet / Council that the appropriate length of service held by a former Councillor in order to qualify for consideration as a nominee for Alderman status should be extended from 12 years to 16 years.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The appropriate length of service held by a former Councillor in order to qualify for consideration as a nominee for Alderman status should be extended from 12 years to 16 years.
2. Nominations put forward take into account factors such as the nominees previous attendance at Council / Committee meetings and / or contribution the individual had made to the Council.

Consideration was given to a report that presented the findings from the review of Stockton Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and the recommended changes to the scheme to be implemented from 1 April 2019.

The relevant legislation was The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The regulations provided that an authority must make a members' allowances scheme which must include a basic allowance payable to all members and may provide for the following:

- Special Responsibility Allowance
- Dependant's carers' allowance
- Travelling and subsistence allowance
- Co-optees' allowance

The same Regulations also provided for local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations to the Authority about the allowances to be paid. Details of the Panel members was attached to the report.

The Panel were required to review the operation of the Members Allowance Scheme as requested and on this occasion, following a request by Members, the Panel had reviewed the Co-optees allowance only.

The Members' Allowances Scheme was based on the recommendations that were agreed by Council on 30 April 2014.

The principles of the review were as follows:-

- Comparable figures, using comparable authorities and Nationally available information
- Consideration of previous allowances paid to co-optees through the Stockton Members Allowance Scheme and the number of co-optees appointed from 2005 – 2018
- Consideration of the time input expected of co-optees
- Draw Conclusions
- Agree recommendations to be made to the Full Council

In order to draw their conclusion and formulate recommendations for consideration by Cabinet and agreement by Council, the Panel re-assessed the expected time commitment of co-opted representatives, compared and analysed the amount paid to co-optees across the North East and with those authorities that were deemed to be near neighbours as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants. In addition the Panel considered the number of parent governor co-optees appointed compared to previous years and the amount of allowance previously paid.

The IRP agreed that the allowance paid should reflect the level of responsibility and time commitment required by the role. They acknowledged and applauded the work of co-optees and the role they play in the consideration of Education matters on the Councils committees however, the IRP felt strongly that this role should be performed willingly for the benefit of the public and not attract any remuneration.

The Panel would also like to encourage the recruiting bodies to actively promote the role of the co-optee to avoid vacancies and agreed that it would be appropriate for expenses to be paid in line with the existing members allowances for travel and subsistence scheme. The IRP recommended this approach on a pilot basis until such time as the full review of the Members Allowance scheme.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted and the following changes to the Council's Members Allowance Scheme be approved:-

1. In accordance with the practice adopted by the majority of other local authorities in the region and the Council's CIPFA family nationally, remuneration of co-optee post for Diocesan and Parent Governor representatives be removed.
2. Travel and subsistence allowance be paid to each of these co-opted representatives in accordance with the rates specified within the Members Allowances Scheme.
3. Council write to those recruiting parent governors and diocesan reps to encourage them to actively promote the role.
4. Changes to the scheme be implemented with effect from April 2019.

**C
31/18** **Amendments to Committees for 2018/19**

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

The following amendment had been received and is presented for Council consideration:-

Executive Scrutiny Committee

Remove Councillor Eileen Johnson
Add Councillor Barry Woodhouse

RESOLVED that the above amendment be agreed.

**C
32/18** **Motion**

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.1. The motion was moved by Councillor Matthew Vickers and seconded by Councillor Julia Whitehill:-

"In January of 2017 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to every council leader in the country urging them to adopt the IHRA's definition of anti-semitism.

Our authority, along with other Tees Valley authorities has not yet done so. I take this opportunity to ask members to show the wider public that we can lead locally on this issue as we have on so many others.

Therefore, this council agrees that the authority adopts in full the IHRA's definition of anti-semitism at the earliest opportunity."

Moved by Councillor Jim Beall, seconded by Councillor Norma Stephenson that the substantive motion be amended as follows:-

"This Council agrees that the authority adopts in full the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism forthwith."

A vote took place on the amended motion and the amended motion was agreed.

C
33/18 **Members' Question Time**

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

C
34/18 **Forward Plan and Leader's Statement**

The Deputy Leader of the Council outlined the Forward Plan and gave a statement.

Before the Deputy Leader of the Council updated Members on the work of Cabinet and the Forward Plan he let Members know that The Leader sent his good wishes and reported that he was making good progress following his operation and expects to be back in full swing very soon.

Council last met in June and since then it had been a very busy time, despite the recess.

As always there had been some great events in the summer and the Deputy Leader of the Council was delighted that, following the success of the first Great Tees 10K run, it had been announced that the Borough would host the Great North City Games 2019. The world-class sporting event, which had been staged on the Newcastle-Gateshead Quayside for ten years, would be held in its new location on Stockton High Street on Saturday, 7 September 2019.

Deputy Leader of the Council was also delighted to hear last month that the Red Plains Children's Home in Hartburn, run by the joint venture partners Spark of Genius, received an Ofsted rating of "Outstanding" following their inspection. Congratulations to the team there.

The final Boundary Commission proposals for redrawing the House of Commons constituency boundaries had been laid in Parliament. These appear to be largely unchanged from the proposals consulted on last year and the Council would have wait to hear when the legislation may be timetabled.

Back in the Borough, Cabinet had met twice since Council last met here and

considered a number of important matters.

At it's meeting on the 21st of June, Cabinet considered reports on:

- The 2017-18 annual review of the Council Plan
- Apprenticeships
- National Democracy Week
- The Tees Valley Combined Authority Adult Education Functions Order
- The introduction of the "Setting the Bar" Licensed Premises Award Scheme
- The 2018 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- The Review of Alderman Criteria
- The Housing and Homeless Reduction Strategy for 2018 – 2023

At it's meeting on the 12th July Cabinet considered reports on:

- The People Select Committee scrutiny review of mental health and wellbeing (including suicide and self-harm)
- The Children and Young People Select Committee scrutiny review of inclusion in schools
- The Place Select Committee scrutiny review of the management of memorials
- The Asbestos Management policy
- The Medium Term Financial Plan out-turn report
- The Xentrall annual report
- The Children's Services progress update
- The Affordable Warmth programme
- The annual report on greenhouse gas emissions
- The Southern Gateway
- The selective licensing of private rented accommodation

Looking forward, Cabinet was scheduled to meet twice before the next meeting of Council. Cabinet would meet next on the 27th September and consider reports on:

- Investors in People
- The Medium Term Financial Plan update
- The Annual Audit Letter
- The Annual report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- The Smarter Working in Stockton programme
- The Victoria Site redevelopment
- The Legionella Policy
- The Waste Management Consultation
- The Democracy Diary for 2019-23

After that, Cabinet would meet on the 18th October and consider reports on:

- The Place Select Committee scrutiny review of the consolidation of Thirteen Housing Group
- The Children's Service performance
- The borough's exam results performance

- The SEND strategy
- The Director of Public Health's Annual report
- The Armed Forces Community Covenant update
- The Probation service

And,

- The review of the 2018 Cycling Festival and SIRF

After that the Deputy Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing Members all here at the next meeting on the 31st of October.

Finally, the Deputy Leader of the Council took this opportunity to "advertise" some of the great events which were coming up across the Borough over the next few weeks. As always there was plenty going on.

- The Deputy Leader of the Council encouraged Members to take the opportunity to visit the brilliant and moving Danger Tree exhibition in Wellington Square. A number of schools had visited the exhibition.
- The ever-popular Chic Vintique market would take place here in the High Street on Saturday 6th October,
- The Yarm Fair and traditional Riding takes place from the 18th to the 20th October