

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 23rd September, 2020.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Mohammed Javed), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr David Minchella, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Matthew Vickers, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Julia Whitehill, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks (MD); Margaret Waggott, Nigel Hart, Michael Henderson, Sarah Whaley, Peter Bell (DS); Beccy Brown, Jonathan Nertney (HR,L&C), Garry Cummings (FDBS), Ann Workman (AS), Martin Gray (ChS), Reuben Kench (ECLE), Jamie McCann (CS).

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Tony Hampton and Cllr Laura Tunney.

C **Welcome** **20/20**

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the arrangements for the meeting.

C **Declarations of Interest** **21/20**

The following Councillors each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Motion in support of frontline workers response to the Covid pandemic as a result of they or a family member being employed by one of the organisations referred to in the motion :-

Councillors Jim Beall, Pauline Beall, Bob Cook, Nigel Cooke, Evaline Cunningham, Kevin Faulks, Luke Frost, Ray Godwin, Eileen Johnson, Tina Large, Mick Moore, David Minchella, Steve Nelson, Jean O'Donnell, Tony Riordan, Mike Smith, Norma Stephenson, Ted Strike, Sylvia Walmsley, Sally Ann Watson, Paul Weston, Julia Whitehill and Barry Woodhouse.

Councillors Clare Gamble and Helen Atkinson each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Motion in support of frontline workers response to the Covid pandemic as members of Billingham Town Council.

Councillor Matthew Vickers declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Motion on school transport as he was one of the MP's named within the motion.

C **Minutes** **22/20**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020 be confirmed

and signed as a correct record.

C **Public Question Time**

23/20

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

C **Ward Boundary Review - Council Submission**

24/20

Consideration was given to a report on the content of the Council's proposed Council Size submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission as part of its electoral review of ward boundaries for the Borough of Stockton on Tees.

The start of the electoral review process required the Commission to gather initial information from the local authority, including electoral forecasts and other electoral data to enable the Commission to decide how many Councillors should be elected to the local authority in the future. This decision was based on the evidence received from the local authority itself and any political groups that wish to make their views known. Factors taken into consideration by the Commission would be to understand elected members requirements across the following aspects presented as part of the Council size submission:

- Strategic Leadership – how many councillors are needed to give strategic leadership and direction to the authority?
- Accountability Scrutiny – how many councillors are needed to provide scrutiny to the authority?
- Regulatory – how many councillors are needed to meet the regulatory requirements of the authority?
- Partnerships – how many councillors are required to manage partnerships between the local authority and other organisations?
- Community Leadership – how the representational role of councillors in the local community is discharged and how they engage with people and conduct casework.

A sustained case was made throughout each Section of the proposed Submission, that validated the retention of Councillor number at its current size, and makes reference to the increasing workload of councillors, carrying out each of their various roles. With an increasing population to serve and a rise in Independent elected representatives reflecting the wide political views and aspirations of the community, there was already huge demands required of each representative prior to the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak. Now, even greater emphasis is placed on each of our community representatives assisting community cohesion and rebuilding our economy, all of which would be shaped by our Council Plan. It was considered vital that all of our elected members can lead this critical work, communicating and engaging the message with all constituents of the Borough. The proposed submission therefore invited Council to recommend to the Boundary Commission that the Council size should at least be maintained at 56 Councillors to ensure that the inevitable increasing needs of constituents were met.

Appreciation was extended to all Political Group Leaders and those members that had participated in preparing this submission. It was noted that in addition

to Council's recommendation to the Boundary Commission, each political group/individual could also make their own submission.

It was expected to hear back from the Boundary Commission on the 20th October when they would announce that consultation on warding patterns would officially commence from the 27th October-11th January 2021. Officers would continue to support Group Leaders and all members during this stage.

The Commission's decision on council size would not be formalised until the Final Recommendations were agreed and published at the end of August 2021.

Cabinet that considered this matter at its meeting held on 17 September 2020 and a copy of the relevant minute extract had been circulated to members.

A vote took place on the recommendation. The recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the proposed Council Size submission document be approved and be submitted to The Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
2. Any requests for further information from the Local Government Boundary Commission to support the approved Council size submission, be delegated to the Managing Director for response in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**C
25/20** **Amendments to Committee for 2019/23**

At its Annual Meeting, held on Wednesday 22 May 2019, the Council approved appointments to its Committees, Panels and Joint/Outside Bodies for 2019/23.

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

Children and Young People Select Committee

Remove Councillor Marilyn Surtees (Lab)

Add Councillor Lauriane Povey (Lab)

RESOLVED that the above amendment be agreed.

**C
26/20** **Motion**

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40. The motion was moved by Councillor Bob Cook, seconded by Councillor Jim Beall:-

“This Council wishes to place on record our profound gratitude and admiration for the unstinting work and bravery of all local frontline workers throughout the continuing Covid crisis.

These include those from the NHS, the care sector, blue light services, teachers and school staff, transport workers, essential retail workers, post and parcel deliverers, the Armed Forces, the borough's many volunteers and, not least, our own workforce and our contractors. They have been a lifeline to many and an inspiration to us all, showing the whole Borough of Stockton-on-Tees at its finest and we thank you on behalf of our residents."

A vote took place on the motion. The motion was carried.

C
27/20

Motion

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40. The motion was moved by Councillor Ted Strike, seconded by Councillor Alan Watson:-

"Following my correspondence with my MP Matt Vickers, and his meetings with The Secretary of State for Education and also The Secretary of State for Transport, the Government extended the current rules for 11 months to the change in the position of "Paid for Seats".

I have contacted the Leader of the council and a senior officer to ask what can be done after this extension, I was advised the only thing the council can do is lobby our two MP's.

My understanding is the only thing stopping children who have been outside the catchment area continuing paying to use the buses is the fact the buses are not compliant with the regulations regarding disabled access.

I propose that SBC only award contracts to bus companies that are fully compliant to the PSVAR regulations. This would mean we are removing Old buses which no doubt have high levels of CO2 emissions.

This would mean the buses are accessible for children to use who are outside the catchment area and pay for their seat as has been the case for many years.

This should be brought into practice from September 2021 therefore removing any further problems going forward, I am sure the Government who brought this legislation into being in 2000 did not intend it to penalise the children, but to ensure they had disabled access."

Following a debate Councillor Ted Strike indicated that he would request further discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. Councillor Ted Strike withdrew his motion with the consent of the meeting.

C
28/20

Members' Question Time

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Julia Cherrett for response by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport:-

“Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport confirm how much funding this Council was allocated from tranche one of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund and explain how this funding has been spent?”

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport responded with:-

“Stockton was allocated £96,303 from the Emergency Active Travel Grant. We have developed

Cycling facilities:

- Further cycle parking in town centres
- Developed bus lanes for cycle use

Pedestrian facilities:

- Provided a significant amount of social distancing signage within our town centres
- Reallocated parking bays to allow for social distancing in Yarm
- Reallocated road space to pedestrians on Bishopton Lane to allow for social distancing
- Reallocated road space to pedestrians on Stockton High Street to allow for social distancing
- Improved crossing times at a number of key crossings within town centres to reduce dwell time”

**C
29/20**

Forward Plan and Leader's Statement

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

The Council last met (virtually) as a full Council in July, since then Cabinet met on the 17 September and considered the following matters:

- The Annual report for the Borough from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- The Annual update report on the Armed Forces Covenant
- A report on the Local Government Boundary Commission Ward Boundary Review.

Looking ahead, Cabinet would next meet on the 15 October and then on the 12th of November where it was due to consider reports on:

- Customer Service Excellence
- The annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report
- The Thornaby Town Investment Plan
- The Economic Climate Update
- The Annual Audit Letter
- An update on the Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN & Early Years
- An update on the Medium Term Financial Plan position
- A review of the Private Landlord Membership scheme

After that the Leader of the Council looked forward to the next meeting of Council on 18 November 2020.

Until then the Leader of the Council hoped that everyone stayed safe and well and hoped to see some improvement in the Covid situation. The Council was continuing to keep a close eye on the local position and to respond and adapt services as required. The Leader of the Council would continue to provide updates for Members.

And to finish on a positive note the Leader of the Council was pleased to say that good progress was being made on-site at the Globe despite the Covid restrictions and he was hoping that there would be some exciting announcements from our operators ATG very soon.