

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Kevin Faulks), Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr David Minchella, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Nigel Hart, Michael Henderson, Peter Bell (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Garry Cummings,(F,D&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH).

Also in attendance: Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

C 28/21 Welcome

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

C 29/21 Former Councillor Michael Womphrey

Members were aware former Councillor Michael Womphrey had sadly passed away.

Michael served for 28 years in local government in Stockton-on-Tees and was presented with Honorary Alderman status in 2015.

He represented the Billingham West Ward from 1987 to 2015.

During this time, Michael served on numerous committees including Audit, Planning, Environment and other scrutiny committees.

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

C 30/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

C 31/21 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021.

Councillor Stefan Houghton reported that with regard minute C 21/21 - Ward Boundary Review - Warding Patterns Consultation that the date of October 2021 had changed and was now scheduled for November 2021.

The meeting was informed that the situation would be investigated and all Members would be informed of the outcome.

Subsequently all Members were informed that as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) had made a number of scheduling changes to their programme and they were now planning to publish Final Recommendations on 23 November 2021.

LGBC reserved the right to conduct an additional round of consultation if it was minded to make significant changes to its draft recommendations, and where it lacked sufficient evidence of local views in relation to those changes. It was therefore possible that further limited consultation may be required in Stockton-on-Tees. In such circumstances, LGBC would conduct a further 5-week consultation period, with Final Recommendations published in Spring 2022.

LGBC would write to the Council again following their meeting on 16 November 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

C
32/21 **Public Question Time**

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

C
33/21 **Motion**

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40 moved by Councillor Norma Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Nigel Cooke:-

“Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council believes planning works best when developers and the local communities work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes.

This Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that he reconsiders his intention to remove local resident’s rights to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood if the area is zoned for growth renewal.

This Council also resolves to write to the Members of Parliament for Stockton North and Stockton South, requesting both of them to consider writing to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in support of this Councils position.”

Following a debate a vote took place.

The motion was carried.

Motion

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40 moved by Councillor Dan Fagan, seconded by Councillor Lynn Hall:-

“In January 2019 this Council adopted The Local Plan, which sets out the Council’s policies and proposals to guide planning decisions and establishes the framework for the sustainable growth and development of the Borough up to 2032.

It covers a range of matters including the number of new homes that are needed and where they should be located; the amount and proposed location of new employment land; protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment; provision of new infrastructure and improvement of town centres and community facilities in the Borough.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as a Local Planning Authority has a responsibility to produce documents for its area that set out its policies for the development and use of land. The Local Plan, also known as a development plan, is the most important of these, including allocations of land for development and general planning policies.

To be effective plans need to be kept up to date. The National Planning Policy Framework states policies in local plans and spatial development strategies, should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary.

Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) local planning authorities must review local plans, and Statements of Community Involvement at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every 5 years. Reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand. Plans may be found sound conditional upon a plan update in whole or in part within 5 years of the date of adoption.

There will be occasions where there are significant changes in circumstances which may mean it is necessary to review the relevant strategic policies earlier than the statutory minimum of 5 years, for example, where new cross-boundary matters arise. Local housing need will be considered to have changed significantly where a plan has been adopted prior to the standard method being implemented, on the basis of a number that is significantly below the number generated using the standard method, or has been subject to a cap where the plan has been adopted using the standard method. This is to ensure that all housing need is planned for as quickly as reasonably possible.

The Local Plan-Housing Supply Assessment (2020-2025) and Housing delivery Test Results (January 2021) presented to the Planning committee on 10th March 2021 clearly show that, at present, there is an over provision of +417 dwellings against the local Plan.

This over provision will only increase as we move toward the end of the five-year assessment.

Our Council recently, and quite correctly refused an application for 300 further houses in Yarm, ruling that traffic from the new homes near Yarm railway station would increase tailbacks on surrounding routes and hit wider safety in the area. Our Planning Officers also believed the off-site works to widen Leven Road would also harm its character and have an “unacceptable impact”. The developer has appealed this decision and as a result the Planning inspectorate will hold public hearings in November. The developer has cited that the area for development has been identified as such in the Local Plan.

It is now time to review the Local Plan, particularly in terms of planned dwelling numbers, and assess how this over provision, and the likelihood of it increasing dramatically will further impact on our Towns, Villages and communities.

Motion

Stockton Borough Council immediately commence a review of The Local Plan to ensure that it is proportionate, relevant, up-to-date and effectively addresses the needs of our local communities.”

Members debated the motion.

At this point and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.65 Councillor Dan Fagan requested that a recorded vote be taken; which was supported by at least a quarter of the members present:-

Members in favour of the motion:-

Councillors Jackie Bright, Dan Fagan, John Gardener, Lynn Hall, Stefan Houghton, Niall Innes, Steve Matthews, Maurice Perry, Andrew Sherris, Lee Spence, Hugo Stratton, Ted Strike, Laura Tunney, Hilary Vickers, Alan Watson and Sally Ann Watson,

Members against the motion:-

Councillors Louise Baldock, Chris Barlow, Jim Beall, Pauline Beall, Carol Clark, Bob Cook, Nigel Cooke, Evaline Cunningham, Ian Dalgarno, Lisa Evans, Kevin Faulks, Clare Gamble, Ray Godwin, Barbara Inman, Eileen Johnson, Paul Kirton, Tina Large, Ann McCoy, David Minchella, Steve Nelson, Jean O'Donnell, Lauriane Povey, Mike Smith, Norma Stephenson OBE, Mick Stoker, Marilynn Surtees, Steve Walmsley, Sylvia Walmsley, Paul Weston and Barry Woodhouse.

Abstentions:-

Councillor Bill Woodhead MBE.

The motion was not carried.

C
35/21

Members' Question Time

The following question has been submitted by Councillor Maurice Perry for

response by the Leader of the Council:-

“Due the inflammatory/libellous letter sent to residents of the Fairfield Ward in August of this year, is it your intention to take the matter further and seek legal advice?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“I found the letter disgraceful and I believe the letter is libellous and as a consequence I have forwarded a copy of the letter to Association of Labour Councils who give legal advice to Labour Councils across the country and we are waiting for that advice to come back to us.”

The following question has been submitted by Councillor Ted Strike for response by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing:-

“In their Spring Newsletter IBIS had an article with the Headline

“IBIS successfully lobby for a new park behind All Saints and for Romano park upgrades.”

The article then says

“The money is to be used to improve Romano Park and transform the land at the rear of All Saints School into a large green park, with additional tree and shrub planting, drainage improvement and additional pathways, so it can be enjoyed by all, including those less able bodied. This should improve accessibility for walkers and provide equipment for less able bodied and a large area for residents to relax surrounded by green foliage. There may also be the potential for the provision of a small café and a small play area. This reflects the results of the consultation held by SBC during 2020 about the use of the land in IB Town Centre where more parks and gardens and community facilities were the top-ranking priorities of residents.”

Can you tell me have IBIS negotiated funds for these improvements with SBC or is the money coming from the £3m raised at the MTFP agreed in February 2020?”

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing responded with:-

““In October 2020 Cabinet approved the development of masterplans for each of the Borough’s six town centres. In February 2021 Cabinet approved masterplans that included Ingleby Barwick and this noted use of funding previously approved in the February 2020 Medium Term Financial Plan.

As part of the ongoing engagement process across communities in all six of the Borough’s town centres, engagement with ward councillors whose wards have specific elements of the programme within them are naturally a key stakeholder in the evolution of proposals.

Of course town centres serve wider communities than the immediate wards they are located within and that is why engagement with adjacent wards is also

critical in this process. It has been heartening to see many of the local ambitions that have been identified for a number of years across our towns to be able to be developed into reality as we move towards completing these masterplans and delivering out on them.

The engagement process with councillors from all wards and wider communities is continuing and I have been delighted as Cabinet Member to hear about some of the older ideas coming to life as well as some exciting new proposals that we are developing.”

Councillor Ted Strike asked the following supplementary question:-

“In the article in then goes onto re-iterate something that IBIS prepared for their facebook page over a year ago giving their ideas that had been passed by SBC, in my negotiations with senior officers I’m led to believe the proposals that were put forward the East Ward Councillors which would include a BMX park behind All Saints Schools well over 100 metres away from houses and also a skate park inside Romano Park and a café in Romano Park which would be far more useful than a café in the piece of land that is only used by dog walkers, could you tell me if this has been agreed already and are we wasting our time putting our proposals forward bearing in mind that in a few months’ time we will see what has been said in the last 15 months by IBIS Councillors?”

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing responded with:-

“This is an on-going process and we got some time before it is concluded before decisions are made. I listen to all sides of the argument and listen very carefully to the people of Ingleby Barwick and the stakeholders. At the end of the day we have to make a decision and as you know funding for our town centres programme comes from a variety of sources not least the government programme. The Council has also put funding in to support its 6 towns and I would like to take Councillor Strike back to 26 February 2020 when we considered the significant investment programme for the Borough’s 6 towns centres and it’s a matter of record as there was a recorded vote that night that following the backing of an amendment which would have radically altered our investment programmes, an amendment which was supported by Councillor Strike which thankfully was lost we went to a vote on the substantive motion which was the backing of the budget and some Councillors from Ingleby Barwick who wanted investment voted for that investment but a number of Councillors including Councillor Strike actually voted against that budget, that is a matter of public record.”

The following question has been submitted by Councillor Ted Strike for response by the Leader of the Council:-

“During the Council meeting in February this year where we discussed the MTFP we were advised that the council borrowings were approximately £180m and the cost of the repayments of these loans represented 2.2% of the Councils income. Rising next year to approx. £200m and 3 % of the council income.

When someone applies for a mortgage or a loan the lenders gauge the ability to repay the loan using their disposable income not their full income.

Can the Leader of the Council advise me if the Council were to use the disposable income method how much in percentage terms would these borrowings represent when all fixed costs such as salaries, Adult Social Services, Children's Social Services etc were deducted?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"The indicator used by the Council in is in line with the prudential code which determines standard accounting practice for local authorities and cannot attempt to differentiate spending in the way Cllr Strike outlines."

**C
36/21**

Forward Plan and Leader's Statement

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

The Council had last met on the 14 July. Since then Cabinet met twice in July and then once in September and considered the following matters:

- 3 Scrutiny Review reports from Select Committees on:
 - Carbon Monoxide Awareness
 - Education, Employment and Training outcomes for Care Leavers and,
 - Hospital Discharge
 - The March 2021 MTFP out-turn report
 - A report on a Strategic Framework for Reducing Inequalities in the Borough
 - A report on tackling food poverty in the Borough
 - The Xentrall Annual report
 - The Procurement Plan for higher value contracts
 - A report on School Term and Holiday Dates
 - A report on the school admissions policy
 - The Stockton Town Centre development masterplan
 - The annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's report
 - The residents survey
 - The Quarter 1 financial update
 - The "PLuSS" Private Landlord Led Membership Scheme review
- And,
- The Best Start strategy

Cabinet would next meet on the 14 October and then the 18 November to consider:

- A report on the Strategic Framework for Reducing Inequalities in the Borough
 - The Council Tax Reduction scheme
 - The annual review of the Council's Constitution
 - The mid-year update on the 2021-24 Council Plan
 - An update on the reshaping of our town centres
 - The Tees Valley waste project
 - The Childcare sufficiency assessment
 - The School Organisation Plan

After that the Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing Members at the

next meeting which was on the 24 November.