

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 20th July, 2022.

Present: The Worship the Mayor (Cllr Ross Patterson), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, 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 Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher, Peter Bell, John Devine, Rachel Harrison, Sophie Haste (CS), Garry Cummings (F,D&R&DMD), Martin Gray (ChS), Reuben Kench (CS,E&C), Ann Workman (A&H).

Also in attendance: Members of Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF), members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Jackie Bright, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr David Minchella, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Julia Whitehill.

C **Welcome** **32/22**

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

C **Declarations of interest** **33/22**

There were no interests declared.

C **Minutes** **34/22**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 15 June be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

C **Presentation to Bright Minds Big Futures for the Queen's Award for** **35/22** **Voluntary Service (QAVS)**

A presentation was made to Bright Minds Big Futures for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS).

The Worshipful the Mayor informed the meeting that every day, millions of people across the UK are making a difference by volunteering. Each year, outstanding examples of this work were celebrated through the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). Created in 2002 for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, QAVS awards had been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups for many years.

Equivalent to an MBE, QAVS were the highest awards given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they were awarded for life.

The award winners for this year were announced on 2 June 2022, with Bright

Minds Big Futures (BMBF) picking up a Queen's Award in the year's honours. BMBF formed in 2017 and had gone from strength to strength. Open to any young person in the Borough from 11-19 or up to 25 with SEN, BMBF provided amazing opportunities for young people to get involved in democracy and shape service delivery, along with volunteering and social action activities that make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live and grow up. From volunteering on growing sites across Stockton, to working with Public Health developing mental health social media campaigns, to hosting their own fundraising music nights, BMBF were a brilliant example of the power and passion of young people to make a real difference in their community.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Cook also addressed the meeting and thanked BMBF for their hard work and dedication to volunteering in the Borough.

Members of BMBF were in attendance at the meeting and were presented with a certificate of their achievement.

C
36/22

Public Question Time

The following question was submitted by Nina Buch:-

"Why is Stockton's Library Service hiring a Drag Queen (an adult entertainer) to promote and read his books to young children when many more appropriate children's authors are available?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Health Leisure and Culture (by way of written response in the absence of Nina Buch:-

"Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council works actively to support diversity in the community it serves. This includes delivering events, activities and services directed at the widest range of residents. We are sorry if the Drag Queen Story Time UK tour causes concerns for some people, but we would like to reassure everyone that there is no element of adult entertainment or sexual theme included and it is appropriate for children's age groups.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council operates strict safeguarding procedures across all its functions, including the Libraries and Information Service and all events are assessed for any potential safeguarding issues.

The Library Service also adheres to the Ethical Framework set out by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), which incorporates a commitment to human rights, equalities and diversity, and the equitable treatment of users. The Drag Queen Story Time UK programme is visiting more than 20 libraries across the country and has been endorsed by CILIP."

The following question was submitted by Nina Buch:-

"Do Stockton Council find it appropriate for Sab Samuel who's stated aim is to be a role model to 5-year-old "queer children", an adult concept of sexuality and identity, to entertain children?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Health Leisure and Culture (by way of written response in the absence of Nina Buch:-

“In many ways the delivery of the event is similar to the popular Pantomime experiences and is really a traditional story time using familiar titles such as “We’re going on a Bear Hunt”.

The intent of the event is to reflect the diversity of our community and we recognise that some may not wish to attend. However, Stockton’s Library Service is amongst a number of others who have worked successfully on events which provide, with full parental consent, a way of introducing younger people to the ideas of diversity and inclusion in sessions devised by professional librarians.

We have already delivered similar events including a Family Pride Day at Thornaby Central Library in March, which received very positive feedback from over 100 members of the public and the families who took part in the activities. Events of this kind have been delivered across a wide range of library services in the UK including Bristol, Somerset, Guernsey, Cornwall, Bolton and Clapham. I would like to stress that the Drag Queen will be reading stories not delivering a personal political philosophy, and perhaps more importantly, this this event is for accompanied children whose parents have made an informed decision to participate and that those who have concerns about the views of the Drag Queen need not attend.”

**C
37/22**

Appointment of Managing Director and Director of Corporate Services

Consideration was given to a report on the appointment of Managing Director and Director of Corporate Services.

The recruitment and appointment process had been undertaken under the Constitution “Employment Procedure Rules” as detailed in section 3.333 – 3.342. The duly constituted Appointments Panel, appointed in line with section 2.71 of the Constitution had met and carried out a selection process to identify a Managing Director and Head of Paid Service for Stockton on Tees Borough Council and the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services post was also the Council’s Monitoring Officer. The Council was required to appoint a Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The appointment of the Monitoring Officer was reserved to the Council and could not be made by any other body.

The panel carried out the appointments process in line with the process set out in section 2.71 of the Council’s Constitution and in line with the Council’s policies and employment procedures.

Penna Recruitment Agency were appointed to assist with the recruitment process. Penna created a website to advertise the roles and conducted an executive search, adverts were also placed on the Council’s website, the Penna website, the North East Jobs website and in the MJ journal and website.

Managing Director

With regard the appointment of the Managing Director initial technical assessment interviews were conducted by Penna with support from Beccy Brown, Director of Corporate Services. Following this the Members Appointment Panel was provided with a longlist of 9 candidates to consider. A shortlist of 4 candidates was agreed and they were invited to the selection and interview process which took place over two days on 4th and 5th July.

The Appointments Panel agreed the presentation topic and interview questions and for the following Advisory Panels to provide input to the appointment process:-

- A Members panel, with invited representative Members from all political groups
- A Stakeholders panel with representatives from:
 - Cleveland Police
 - The North East and North Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board
 - Catalyst
 - Vision Academy Trust
 - Bright Minds Big Futures
 - FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies
- A Culture panel with employee representatives from our staff Forums and Well-Being Champions across the organisation.
- An informal discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Conservative Group (the largest opposition group).

With regard the Director of Corporate Services initial technical assessment interviews were conducted by Penna with support from Beccy Brown, Director of Corporate Services. Following this the Members Appointment Panel was provided with a longlist of 16 candidates to consider. A shortlist of 4 candidates was agreed and they were invited to the selection and interview process which took place over two days on 5th and 6th July.

The Appointments Panel agreed the presentation topic and interview questions. They also agreed a number of Advisory Panels for the Director of Corporate Services as follows:

- A Members panel, with invited representative Members from all political groups
- A Culture panel with employee representatives from our staff Forums and Well-Being Champions across the organisation.

Prior to the start of the formal interviews the Appointments Panel was provided with detailed feedback from each of the Advisory Panels. The Appointments Panel then met and interviewed each of the candidate for the two roles.

Following the interviews two references and pre-employment medical checks were taken up for each candidate.

Having taken this evidence into account the Appointments Panel recommend the appointment of Michael Greene to the post of Managing Director and Head

of Paid Service and Gerard Morton to the post of Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The appointment of Michael Greene be approved to the post of Managing Director and Head of Paid Service.
2. The appointment of Gerard Morton be approved to the post of Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

**C
38/22**

Appointment to Vice Chair of the Planning Committee for 2022/23

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.

A vacancy had occurred for the position of Vice Chair of the Planning Committee. The following nomination had been received:-

Cllr Andrew Sherris

RESOLVED that Cllr Andrew Sherris be appointed to the position of Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

**C
39/22**

Motion

The following Motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40, moved by Cllr Tony Riordan, seconded by Cllr Lynn Hall:-

"Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council supports every parent of children in our primary schools by providing them with free school meals. Ensuring that every child, no matter what the personal financial circumstances of their parents are; receives at least one nourishing meal a day when in school."

In-line with the Council Procedure Rule 3.205 and after the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People had commented upon it, the motion was referred without discussion to the Cabinet for consideration, prior to its reconsideration by Council.

**C
40/22**

Members' Question Time

The following Member Question submitted by Cllr Ted Strike:-

"In view of the current cost of living crisis, with Gas and Electricity costs rising sharply, and rumours of even higher increases coming in the autumn along with diesel prices increases of around 40%. What effect will this have on this council's projections for this current financial year?"

If as I suspect this will have a major impact, how will the Labour led council fund

this deficit, will they

- a) Use our reserves to plug the shortfall
- b) Reduce services
- c) Increase council tax by a greater amount than 2% and hold a referendum?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“The Budget set by the Council for the current financial year (2022/23) did recognise significant inflationary pressures and an additional £2.65m was included for Energy and Fuel costs.

The inflationary pressures currently facing local authorities were highlighted in a finance report to Cabinet last week. The Report highlighted that the impacts are currently being assessed and will be included in future update reports on the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan.”

Cllr Ted Strike asked the following supplementary question:-

“Should the future events mean that the plan you have is unaffordable will this Council then agree to halt all future borrowing and spending including monies for Splash until this cost of living crisis is over?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“I as Leader of this Council can’t answer that question as it would be a Council decision, so unfortunately I can’t give you an answer to that question.”

The following Member Question submitted by Cllr Ted Strike:-

“Ingleby Barwick Town Council have been working with and taking advice from SBC to provide ANPR cameras at the 3 entrances to the town. The cameras were installed on the 8th July 2021.

When will SBC give the go ahead to switch these cameras on and increase the safety and security of our residents?

The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities & Community Safety responded with:-

“Firstly can I say that the cameras in Ingleby Barwick are live, however the facility for ANPR is not, it is not up to SBC to give the go-ahead to turn that facility on.

The use of CCTV and other technology that obtains the data of the public is rightly governed to the highest degree. The public have a right to go about their lawful business without the concern that personal data is being obtained over and above what is lawful and proportionately needed in order to keep our communities safe.

The use of CCTV cameras in Ingleby Barwick is but one tool which is used to ensure that our communities are a safe and welcoming place to live and visit.

Ingleby Barwick continues to be one of the safest places in Stockton on Tees in terms of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour with instances of both reducing when compared to other areas of Stockton on Tees. Overall Stockton on Tees continues to have the lowest recorded rates of crime and anti-social behaviour in Cleveland.

The use of ANPR as a tool must be done within the rules set in both the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and by the Information Commissioners Office. Based on the guidance and considering the low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Ingleby Barwick compared to other areas, we do not feel that there is currently a genuinely lawful need to read and gather vehicle registration marks in a way that is fair, proportionate and transparent. We will of course keep this matter under regular review in consultation with Ingleby Barwick Town Council, who are already aware of the situation I have outlined.”

Cllr Ted Strike asked the following supplementary question:-

“We did have a response last night at Ingleby Barwick Town Council from Community Safety Operations Manager and SBC will be getting a response from the Town Council. Over the period where we have taken this advice from SBC we have carried out consultation where 85-93% of the people who responded were in favour of the cameras, I would like to know the number of people who have submitted objections to the cameras and I will be submitting an FOI for that information. Can I ask if SBC will be prepared to contact the ICO and ask them if all the actions we have taken are acceptable and that we aren't breaking any laws and if they will consider turning the ANPR aspect of the cameras on? There has been a high level of car crime in the recent weeks and the Town Council has got the updated figures for this and will no doubt they will be forward that information to yourselves”

The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities & Community Safety responded with:-

“It is not as simple as just contacting ICO, I do know that they have had at least one complaint before the ANPR cameras even go live. A request form must be submitted on the ICO portal and we must have the figures to justify the ANPR aspect of the cameras as it is against Human Rights to take the registration numbers of everyone. If crime and ASB increases drastically then the criteria may be made but at the minute the figures don't justify the ANPR aspect of the cameras.”

C 41/22 Forward Plan and Leader's Statement

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

Council last met on the 15th June. Since then, Cabinet met on 23rd June and then again on the 14th July when it considered the following matters:

- An update on the 2021-24 Council Plan.
- A report on the outcome and next steps following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review of the Borough.
- The final report of the Children and Young People Select Committee's

scrutiny review of child poverty.

- The 2021-22 Medium Term Financial Plan out-turn report
- The Xentrall Annual Report
- A Town Centres update
- A report on the review of the Council's Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy
- The outcome of the People Select Committee's scrutiny review of The Tees Credit Union
- The outcome of the Place Select Committee's scrutiny review of residents parking zones

Cabinet would next meet on the 15th September and consider:

- Financial Update and Medium-Term Financial Plan (Quarter 1 2022/2023)
- Early Years Sufficiency Assessment
- School Performance 2021-22
- Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land

Before that the Leader of the Council was looking forward to lots of great events over the Summer. SIFR would begin on 4th August with a spectacular opening show on Stockton riverside. There's also the popular Teddy Bear's picnic in Preston Park later in August and the annual shows in Billingham and Thornaby in the first 2 weekends of September.

After that the Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing everyone at the next full Council meeting on 21st September.