

## Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

### Call-In Request Form

I/We request that the following matter be called-in for consideration by the Executive Scrutiny Committee for the reason(s) stated below.

I/We understand that a minimum of six Members of the Council excluding Cabinet Members, or two Education representatives with voting rights in respect of education matters, must submit this request before the call-in procedure is implemented.

<b>Decision making body ie. Cabinet, Officer, or Joint Arrangement</b>	Cabinet
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<b>Details of decision</b>	Powering Our Future – Programme Update
<b>Ref. number (if any)</b>	
<b>Date of decision</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

<b>We consider that the decision is not in accordance with the following principle(s) of Paragraph 1.35 of the Constitution for the reason stated -</b>	
<b>Principle(s) (overleaf)</b>	<b>Reason(s)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);</li> <li>• due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;</li> <li>• respect for human rights and equality of opportunity;</li> <li>• a presumption in favour of openness;</li> <li>• clarity of aims and desired outcomes; and</li> <li>• an explanation of what options have been considered and giving the reasons for decisions</li> <li>• relevant matters have not been ignored</li> <li>• clarity and explanation of information provided</li> </ul>	<p>Although the Cabinet Report covers a wide range of issues, it is only the following matters that are requested to be called in.</p> <p>It is recognised that the prudential borrowing recommendations are a full council matter, however it is also recognised that Council would need the detailed information, that is lacking (in parts) within the report, to make an informed decision.</p> <p>The Cabinet Report contains the following recommendations to introduce the subsequent decisions made,</p> <p><i>Cabinet is recommended to agree the updates and recommendations to ensure that the Council continues to deliver its commitment to the Powering Our Future Missions; to address the financial challenges we face at the same time as improving outcomes for communities, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Creation of opportunities to build brighter futures for our communities and reduce inequality, using the limited amount of money we have available.</i></li> </ul>

- *Carefully managing our resources, creating a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that are valued by our residents.*

Although the introduction reference's improving outcomes for our communities, creating brighter communities and reducing inequality, while providing efficient services valued by our residents, it is believed this is wording used simply to soften the blow and detract from the main focus of the report, which is to address the financial blackhole and problems created by under investment and neglect of the issues over many years.

The report lacks any consideration of consultation with residents, it lacks an obvious impact assessment that should have been conducted, there is no evidence provided to support the decisions that inequality will be reduced and providing efficient services valued by our customers.

#### **Waste and Recycling**

The report contains the following,

*Cabinet is recommended to:*

1. *Approve the recommended options set out in the report in respect of the Waste and Recycling Reviews:*

- *Introduction of charging for green waste from 1st April 2025*
- *Introduction of weekly food waste and recycling service from 1st April 2026 with the acquisition of associated vehicles and the development of a Waste Transfer Station*
- *Cease the provision of the Community Recycling Centres with immediate effect.*

The Cabinet report proposes to introduce an annual charge of £40 to residents from April 2025 for the collection of green waste, suggesting that the present arrangements are effectively fully subsidised by the Council. This statement is misleading, the council presently have a budget to collect this waste, and it is taken from monies provided to the council by the taxpayer. The present proposal is to effectively charge the council taxpayer

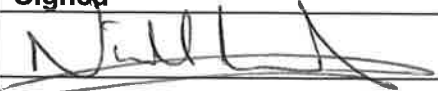


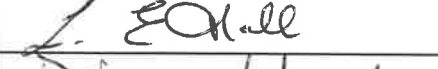
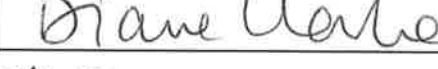
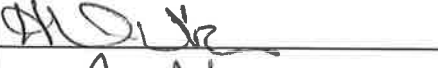

	<p>twice for the same service and provide no service for those residents who do not sign up, even though they have and continue to pay for it through council tax.</p> <p>The report recommends the borrowing of £1m to purchase 40,000 bins (£25 each).</p> <p>However, it appears only 30,000 bins will be required in years 1 and 2 (using projected income figures, 15,000 bins each year within the report) therefore the question is, why are 40,00 bins and the excess finance required. The lack of clarity around these figures needs to be explained in detail.</p> <p>No information is provided in the report to evidence why the figure of £1m has been reached (price to pay) if it has not yet been put out to tender.</p> <p>No information has been provided in the report for green waste (tonnage, ward data) collected by the council per annum despite numerous requests for this figure to be provided by officers. It is understood that a cancelled members briefing on this topic was provided to cabinet members only.</p> <p>No consultation has taken place with residents.</p> <p>The report outlines in detail the introduction of waste food collection and the associated costs with purchasing receptacle/caddies, the vehicles for collection and the making good of a waste transfer station, totalling £2.3m, and the prudential borrowing to cover the costs.</p> <p>However, the report also outlines that the government are responsible for <u>all the additional costs associated with this new burden.</u></p> <p><b><i>The introduction of weekly food waste collection is required from April 2026. Since this is a new burden to local authorities, Government is required to cover all additional costs.</i></b></p> <p>The report does not explain why borrowing is needed if the costs are to be met by government.</p> <p>Defra reported in March 2024 that new funding will cover <b>new food waste containers for homes and specialist collection vehicles</b>, targeted at local authorities that have yet to fully put food waste service in place. Why is this not referenced in the</p>
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	<p>report. This is a very relevant matter and appears to have been ignored. Clarity and further information are sought.</p> <p>There is no explanation of what 'making good' a waste transfer station is defined as.</p> <p>A site has been purchased by the Council for a new waste transfer site, by way of 'urgency of decision' and by an officer seeking the agreement of the chair of the executive scrutiny committee to do so. No details are known of the costs associated with the purchase, where the finance was sought from (Defra grant or other) and why additional borrowing is required to 'make good' of the site that had to be acquired by the end of September 2024, two weeks before the report to Cabinet. The lack of clarity is disturbing, and why Cabinet have not queried these matters. This matter should have been included in the cabinet report, it is relevant and appears to have been ignored, or openness was not considered to be important.</p> <p>Further, it is not explained in the report why it is necessary to purchase 260,000 food caddies (130,000 each of 5l and 25L sizes) when there are only 80,000 households in the borough (SBC's figures) Clarity is sought as to why these figures were arrive at and why Cabinet did not query them.</p> <p>The report references the number of vehicles required,</p> <p><i>To deliver proposals, 22 recycling vehicles are needed. We currently lease 11 vehicles just for recycling which are not suitable to collect food waste. These vehicles will no longer be in use after April 2026</i></p> <p>The Council has awarded hire contracts for 13 refuse vehicles from NRG Riverside Ltd, totalling £6m plus. Are these vehicles the ones referenced, or a combination. The prudential borrowing to lease a further 11 vehicles for recycling as outlined does not appear to match, or is similar, to that needed to contract hire 13 vehicles.</p> <p>Explanation is required to the total number of vehicles required to collect general waste, recycling waste, food waste, and green waste. This is not available in the report but needs to be fully</p>
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	<p>understood to determine what is being sought with regarding funding and services.</p> <p>There is no information with regards subsequent planning permissions needed for the waste transfer site and vehicle storage. Clarity is sought and information should have been included in the report.</p> <p><b>Non-residential care charge</b></p> <p>There are concerns that proposals described as,</p> <p><i>There are currently 49 clients paying the maximum charge. If all of these clients paid the full cost of their care this would generate an additional £300,000 p.a. income. All clients are offered a financial assessment to assess what they can afford to pay, as such a deduction of 50% has been applied to arrive at an estimated additional income of £150,000p.a.</i></p> <p>will target some of our most vulnerable residents, with little or no information contained in the report as to the impacts it will have on the 49 clients. Once again the report focuses on the financial position of the council and not the welfare of its people. The targeting of residents who may have some savings to help fill the council's financial predicament is concerning and clarity and further information are sought as to what other options have been looked at to gather a lowly figure of £150k. The response appears to be disproportionate and will impact on the reputation of the council.</p> <p><b>Car Parking Charges</b></p> <p>No consultation has taken place with residents, ward councillors, business forums, and/or businesses regarding the proposed increase in car parking charges and it is imperative this takes place.</p> <p>Many businesses, and, in particular, small businesses as found on Yarm High St are still in quite a fragile post covid state and rely heavily on the free hour which allows both residents and visitors chance to grab a coffee, some lunch, or as an example to nip into the Post Office, etc.</p> <p>The Yarm Business Forum is seriously worried by the potential loss in footfall which may well be coupled</p>
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	<p>with an upcoming increase in employers National Insurance.</p> <p>The proposals may cripple those very enterprises that we are relying on for the viability and growth in Yarm and elsewhere.</p> <p>The proposal to boost revenue, from the ongoing loss-making position is in part down to inaction by the council to enforce parking time limits, the frequency of parking ticket machines being out of action (and reported by members).</p> <p>There is no information provided as to the financial gap created by these inadequacies and what the gap, if any, would be should the inefficiency be improved.</p> <p>During the briefing with group members representatives, it was put forward that all the council car parks were under invested in and the rise in charges would be a way forward. A question was raised as to what contribution council staff make to paying towards using the car parks during their workday. This went unanswered. These are options that should be investigated further.</p> <p>There is no detail within the report identifying why a figure of £1m has been arrived at to resurface Wellington Square Car Park. Further, there is no information as to why the surface was allowed to deteriorate to such an extent and needing a full resurface, and what has happened with the previous maintenance budget. What options have been explored to repair rather than resurface. Clarity and information should have been sought by the cabinet.</p> <p>The focus of the report remains on resolving the financial predicament it has found itself. The focus appears to be on the changing the financial position of our residents to improve the Council's situation, with, rather than improving the outcomes for our communities.</p>

<b>We request that the following Cabinet Member(s)/Officer(s) to be required to attend the Executive Scrutiny Committee</b>
Corporate Management Team and Council Leader Cllr Bob Cook.

Signed	Print Name
	NIALL INNES
	TONY RIOEDAN
	HUGO STRATTON
	LYNN HALL
	DIANE CLARKE
	HILARY VICKERS
	ANDREW SHERRIS

**This form must be submitted to the Proper Officer (via Democratic Services) within four working days of the publication of the decision i.e. by 12 midnight on the fourth day.**

**Multiple forms (including faxed and e-mailed versions) may be submitted in respect of the same decision. If the form is e-mailed it must be subscribed to by one person only.**

**This form may be returned as follows:**

By hand to any Democratic Services Officer

Email – 'DL Democratic Services'

Office use only	
Date received:	Initials:
Valid: Yes/No	
Reasons for invalidity:	
Reasons notified	
Executive Scrutiny Committee date:	

**Extract from Constitution – Paragraph 1.35**

Decisions of the Council will usually be made in accordance with the following principles:

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers;
- respect for human rights and equality of opportunity;
- a presumption in favour of openness;
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes; and
- an explanation of what options have been considered and giving the reasons for decisions
- relevant matters have not been ignored

- clarity and explanation of information provided

Please also see the guidance contained with the Scrutiny Toolkit, and Constitution.