

## **Local Government Act 1972**

### **Borough of North Tyneside**

**23 November 2017**

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 23 November 2017 at 6.00 pm in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

#### Present

Councillor C Davis (In the Chair)  
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor A Austin  
Councillor K Barrie  
Councillor G Bell  
Councillor L Bell  
Councillor K Bolger  
Councillor B Burdis  
Councillor C Burdis  
Councillor K A Clark  
Councillor D Cox  
Councillor S L Cox  
Councillor N Craven  
Councillor EN Darke  
Councillor S Day  
Councillor D Drummond  
Councillor P Earley  
Councillor R Glendon  
Councillor S Graham  
Councillor I Grayson  
Councillor M A Green  
Councillor M Hall  
Councillor J Harrison  
Councillor Janet Hunter  
Councillor John Hunter

Councillor M Huscroft  
Councillor N J Huscroft  
Councillor F Lott  
Councillor W Lott  
Councillor G Madden  
Councillor M Madden  
Councillor P Mason  
Councillor D McGarr  
Councillor P McIntyre  
Councillor D McMeekan  
Councillor A McMullen  
Councillor L Miller  
Councillor A Newman  
Councillor P Oliver  
Councillor K Osborne  
Councillor J O'Shea  
Councillor A Percy  
Councillor C B Pickard  
Councillor M Rankin  
Councillor M Reynolds  
Councillor L Spillard  
Councillor J Stirling  
Councillor J Walker  
Councillor J A Wallace

**C46/11/17 Public Questions**

**1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Skeldon of North Shields**

I wanted to ask what the council is doing to tackle the increase of drug use in the borough. I live next to a Stonham supported housing scheme and the drug use here and in North Shields in general has visibly risen in the past 12 months.

I have witnessed on many occasions drug deals being done in the street and there seems to be little being done to curb or control this.

We have reported instances to the correct authorities but it would seem nothing is done about it, the exchange of drugs for money is so blatant, the dealers don't even try to hide what they are doing!

It concerns me greatly that the people that are seen hanging round the metro station and the centre of North Shields are stoned and/or drunk and I have witnessed anti social behaviour because of this on too many occasions to even list. It's now got to the stage where there seems little point in reporting incidents as nothing seems to ever be done about it.

Councillor C Burdis responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I can assure you that your Ward Councillors, the Council and myself takes the issue of drug misuse very seriously.

This is why the Riverside Ward Councillors who have indeed witnessed the drug taking for themselves, have met with the Police, the Manager of the bingo hall and senior officers at Nexus to raise both residents' and their own concerns.

During this meeting the issues in relation to the inadequacy of the security at the metro station were discussed.

As a result of this meeting Nexus have now agreed to improve security at the metro station and increase the height of the fence at the station, which was allowing those committing acts of anti-social behaviour to avoid the Police by jumping over the fence. I am pleased to announce that funding has been confirmed from Nexus for the replacement of the fence. They have also appointed an officer to work directly with Northumbria Police around the Nexus Services area in a more cooperative way.

As a result of the Ward Councillors' intervention a further meeting has been organised with the Ward Councillors for Riverside and Chirton Wards and Northumbria Police's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit on Tuesday 28 November 2017.

We do recognise that drug dependence can have a devastating effect on our areas or on our families and friends and as a result the Council also provide community based services that support families and carers of people who misuse drugs.

As well as providing high quality and effective treatment services the Council recognises the need for all residents to feel safe. We will therefore continue to work closely with our partners such as the Police.

Drug related crime is a key priority for the Community Safety Partnership. We have an online reporting system in place and any reports of anti-social behaviour are investigated, allowing the Council, Police, housing and health to look at problem areas or work together to identify a solution.

I would encourage all residents to continue to report anti-social behaviour and where crimes are being committed.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Safer North Tyneside Partnership are overseeing the replacement of existing CCTV cameras across the Borough. This includes working with Northumbria Police to replace their existing cameras in North Shields Town Centre. The work is about to commence and the new cameras should be operational before the end of January 2018.

In relation to Stonham Supported Housing Scheme, I have asked Officers to speak to the Home Group and I know they have been working with you to try and deal with your concerns. Your Ward Councillors have also met with officers at Stonham and Home Group to highlight their concerns. Following these discussions I have been assured that all residents with drug problems are referred to the drug treatment service and the staff are vigilant and report any concerns about the selling of drugs to the Police.

## **2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Quinn of Shiremoor**

How many more green areas are to be lost to expensive unaffordable housing estates in North Tyneside? There are empty properties in the borough, do we really need all these new estates with houses priced over £250,000. There are a number of brown sites and derelict buildings in North Shields and around North Tyneside that should be built on before green fields.

Councillor Harrison responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I would like to thank Ms Quinn for her question.

I think it is important to note that making provision for new housing developments in the borough is not optional. It is a national government requirement of all local authorities in the country to produce a Local Plan, which must include provision for extra housing.

In fact there have been recent statements to suggest that some councils are being forced to build more homes than they would wish because they do not have in place a plan that protects them.

In response to what was a statutory requirement placed upon us, we did produce the North Tyneside Local Plan and this was adopted by Council in July 2017.

In our plan 70 sites have been identified as suitable for housing development. Of these 70 sites, 56 sites are on Brownfield land. In fact we have made provision for over 4,000 homes on Brownfield land in the borough.

Our plan puts certain controls in place for these future developments to ensure they:

- meet identified needs
- provide jobs
- secure the infrastructure to support the growth and

- protect and enhance our valuable green spaces.

Our Local Plan faced an examination in public held by a government appointed independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State who confirmed that plan is in line with National Policy.

In relation to housing land availability the Inspector concluded the following:

“The Council has undertaken a thorough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment exercise which is part of a suite of documents which inform the local plan. This includes an assessment of land suitable for housing which also has considered a vast array of brownfield sites including those suggested in representations.

There is no compelling evidence that a significant brownfield site has been overlooked. The finite capacity of brownfield sites in North Tyneside would not meet all housing, employment and service needs over the period to 2032.

Consequently, this would not be a reasonable alternative spatial strategy. Greenfield land is therefore required.”

These are not my, but the inspector’s words.

In relation to empty properties, there are currently only 1.2% of properties in the borough that have been empty for more than 6 months. This is below the regional average. Although this is a relatively low percentage, helping residents return empty properties to use as soon as possible is part of the housing solution for North Tyneside.

Over the past 5 years the Council and partners have returned 277 long term problematic properties to occupation through a range of measures, advice and practical assistance.

I do hope my answer puts into context the reason for the development activity in the borough and how the Council has responded to the challenge of having to find more development space in the borough

As an aside the North Tyneside Plan protects our green belt, which is 20% of the borough and it creates new and accessible open spaces adding to the 25 % which is already open space, and that does not include our coastline within North Tyneside. Near enough 50% of North Tyneside is either green belt or green land.

### **3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Carruthers of Earsdon**

Given the go ahead for the developers to build on Murton Gap, what modelling of the increased volume of traffic has been carried out with regards of the bypass and additional roundabout on the A186.

This development headlines the area as a good place to live, this development is severely stretching resources of the infrastructure, why are planners allowing housing to be developed on road choke points, Holystone, Backworth, Station Road all built adjacent to roundabouts which when fully populated will increase commuter misery. The current “road improvements” when eventually completed will not be sufficient to manage this. Surely a better investment would be to build large free car parks at metro stations to relieve the roads.

Councillor Harrison responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

A robust traffic modelling exercise of the impact of the Murton Gap development was a requirement when developing the Local Plan. A product of the planning exercise was a co-ordinated strategy for transport and road improvements.

The plan now includes a new strategic transport route from the A186 at Earsdon to the A191 to the west of New York and the A186 has the required capacity to accommodate the traffic predicted as a consequence of the Local Plan.

As the new strategic route provides a more direct and shorter route to the A1058 Coast Road and Cobalt Business Park from areas of Whitley Bay, Monkseaton, and South East Northumberland; we anticipate up to 20% of the existing trips on the A192/A191 and almost half of the trips on Park Lane, Shiremoor will be removed during peak periods once works are complete.

In relation to other pinch points; where required, additional highway capacity will be provided and the investment required to make these improvements is a condition of any planning application for development.

Another important factor is that in addition to the highway improvements I've referred to, the master plan for Murton Gap includes provision of an additional Metro station, with parking, which is an extremely effective mitigation for car trips within North Tyneside. There will also be new bus services and an extensive walking, cycling network across the site which also encourages sustainable modes of travel.

All of this is in line with an agreed Transport Strategy which prioritises sustainable transport.

I do hope this information assures the gentleman we have fully considered the impact of the development on our transport network and have put the right improvement plans in place to address his concerns.

Again our proposals were scrutinised and approved by the government appointed independent Planning Inspector.

#### **4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Baxter of Whitley Bay**

I would like to ask whether anybody has been along The Broadway, namely from the football field at Links Road towards Tynemouth and seen how dark the pavements are. Lights only appear to be on one side and a long distance apart which means the pavements are extremely dark and frankly I wouldn't feel happy walking along them at night. The seafront at Beaconsfield is the same, very few lights very far apart. I can remember when it was policy to make sure pavements were well lit; has the cost now taken over people's safety?

A lot of pavements are too dark as the lights are too high and too far apart. Just walk along the Broadway and see.

Councillor J Stirling responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I'm pleased to receive this question.

The change to the street lighting levels along the Broadway is due to the recent installation of LED lighting. As an Authority we are switching to this type of lighting as it delivers in excess of 60% energy savings.

Also with around £1.5m of electricity being consumed by our street lights every year, I am sure you can see why, in these challenging financial times, we are making this switch. This switch is designed to ensure the new lighting levels meet the current British Standard for Street Lighting and was made after careful trials and in consultation with Northumbria Police.

However, following your comments, I have asked that the lighting levels be checked at this location over the next few weeks as the safety of our residents is of paramount concern to this Council.

I will of course ensure you are informed of our findings and proposed response.

Thank you once again for bringing this to my attention.

## **5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Jarrett of North Shields**

What is North Tyneside Council doing to prevent implementation of STPs and the CCG's planned closure of walk-in centres?

Councillor Hall responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Can I first of all discuss the issue of walk in centres, also known as urgent care centres, and tell you how very concerned and opposed I am to the proposals to close the walk in centres.

In fact, as listed as item 5 on the agenda for this evening's meeting I will be presenting a motion which asks this Council to call upon the Clinical Commissioning Group to go ahead with the planned opening of the 24/7 urgent care at Rake Lane and request a full consultation be undertaken throughout the borough on these controversial proposals.

In addition to this I know that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and MPs have met with Senior Officers from the CCG and have written to them to highlight their own concerns in relation to the consultation exercise and the plans for urgent care in North Tyneside.

Turning now to the STP, the Sustainability and Transformation Plans cover an area larger than North Tyneside. We will therefore be working with the other areas to ensure we are well represented.

We have a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee which met on 13 November and discussed a report on the outcomes of a region-wide engagement exercise. The report stated that:-

- "many people seemed unclear about the purpose of the engagement process"
- "a number expressed frustration that the draft STP did not include more detail"
- "The majority of people who took part in this phase of engagement wanted to debate the detail of how implementing the vision would affect particular services, with concerns raised about potential changes or loss of current services that they value."
- "There were a number of negative comments about the format of the STP with many commenting that it was written in jargon, much of which was not easily understood by people who did not work in health and social care."

- “There was a clear message from many respondents about the need for an open, transparent and inclusive consultation process that enabled people to be involved in shaping services for the future and able to contribute to an informed debate about the options for the future of the local health and social system.”

It is important to note that there are not yet any concrete proposals arising from the STP, which would represent a substantial development or variation of services affecting North Tyneside.

If there are any such proposals in future, North Tyneside CCG will be required to carry out consultation, and the North Tyneside Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the proposals.

In all of these discussions I will ensure that North Tyneside residents are at the forefront of any proposals and are well represented.

## **6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr and Mrs Whittle of Benton**

Having suffered several ‘near misses’ at the junction of Station Road and Glebe Avenue in Benton and having received no response to my query of the Highways department, what measures can be put in place to reduce the speed of vehicles along Station Road and avoid a serious accident at the Glebe Avenue junction?

Councillor Harrison responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

With regard to the concerns Mr and Mrs Whittle have raised about the speed of vehicles at this location, I can confirm the team have carried out a traffic survey on this section of Station Road and the results of this survey show vehicle speeds which comply with the Department for Transport guidance related to the speed limit and classification of this road.

Also, I have checked the police collision database, which I am pleased to report shows that no collisions have been recorded at this location in the last 3 years.

In junction design terms, I am assured that the give way markings at the junction have been aligned to improve visibility for motorists exiting Glebe Avenue, which takes into account its proximity to the bend to the north of the junction.

However, I do accept that not every near miss is recorded and following the concerns they have raised, I have asked officers to arrange for the Variable Message Sign (which displays ‘Your speed’) to be temporarily located in this area, and that further monitoring of vehicle speeds takes place at this location over the next six to twelve months.

Can I thank Mr and Mrs Whittle for raising this question here today.

## **C47/11/17    Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, A Arkle, J Cassidy, L Darke, E F J Hodson, C Johnson, K Lee, T Mulvenna and A Waggott-Fairley.

## **C48/11/17    Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

**C49/11/17 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 September 2017 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**C50/11/17 Motions**

**Motion 1 signed by Councillors A Newman, A McMullen and C B Pickard**

It was moved by Councillor A Newman and seconded by Councillor A McMullen that:

North Tyneside Council has faced unprecedented cuts over the last 7 years. The Government has indicated that the reduction in grants will continue until 2019/20. Increased demand for services while at the same time having huge reductions in our grants from the conservative government means more cuts to vital public services when people need them more than ever.

While North Tyneside Council will have to find over £18m in savings as part of a funding gap of £41m over the next two years. An extra 1bn will be given to Northern Ireland as part of the conservative's supply on demand arrangement with the DUP. This is deeply unfair on our residents who have seen vital services threatened by government budget cuts. The Council therefore calls upon the Mayor to write to the Chancellor asking him to cancel all planned cuts to this Council

In response to a number of Members' questions including the amount of income from Council Tax, Government grants, Council reserves, Council staffing levels over the last seven years, the Chair indicated that a written response would be provided to all Members.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 43 votes to 6 votes.

**Motion 2 signed by Councillors M Hall, M A Green and S Day**

It was moved by Councillor M Hall and seconded by Councillor M Green that:

North Tyneside Council calls upon the Clinical Commissioning Group to go ahead with the planned opening of the 24/7 urgent care centre at Rake Lane hospital as agreed in June this year and promised for the 1st October 2017.

An in-depth review earlier this year established the demand and need for an urgent care centre. Public consultation agreed that the best urgent care service would be a 24/7 provision at Rake Lane hospital.

Residents of North Tyneside want the same quality of provision as those in Northumberland where two local hospitals have 24/7 urgent care centres. Newcastle also has a 24/7 provision of urgent care

A recent statement by the CCG suggesting a shortened day, opening hours of 08.00 until 22.00 and use of NHS 111 and GP's from 22.00 until 08.00 is unacceptable.

In addition, the very poor attendance at the hastily arranged same day public engagement meetings in the Linskill Centre and at Langdale last week, demonstrates that there has not been a full and proper consultation on their new proposals.



Council requests the Mayor:

To write to the CCG and the Minister of Health to retain our 24/7 urgent care centre at Rake Lane hospital and request a full consultation be undertaken throughout the Borough on these controversial proposals.

To campaign locally for the retention of our 24/7 urgent care centre at Rake Lane.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was unanimously approved.

#### **C51/11/17    2016/17 Annual Audit Letter**

Council received the 2016/17 Annual Audit Letter from the Authority's appointed auditors Mazars. The full Letter, covering the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 was attached as Appendix A to the report.

Councillor R Glindon welcomed Ms Diane Harold, Mazars to the meeting, who presented the Annual Audit Letter

The Letter covered:

- The overall conclusion in respect of the Authority's Financial Statements which included the annual governance statement;
- The assessment of arrangements to achieve value for money in the Authority's use of resources;
- Future challenges facing the Authority; and
- Fees payable to Mazars for 2016/17.

The Auditor had issued an unqualified opinion on both the Authority's accounts for 2016/17 and Value for Money conclusion, confirming that the Authority had adequate arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked Mazars and Ms Harold for her presentation.

It was moved by Councillor Glindon and seconded by Councillor B Pickard that:

Council note the contents of the Annual Audit letter.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was unanimously approved.

#### **C52/11/17    Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

Council gave consideration to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2018/19.

Councillor B Pickard welcomed Mr John Anderson, the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who presented the report to the meeting.

The Panel had recommended that no change be made to the current Members' Allowances Scheme for the 2018/19 financial year.

The Chair thanked the Panel for the report.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor R Glindon that:

Council approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2018/19.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was unanimously approved.

### **C53/11/17 Chair of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee**

The Council received a report that detailed the requirement for Council to appoint a Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 Municipal Year as the previous the Chair, Councillor G Bell, had been appointed as a Cabinet Member with effect from 1 October 2017.

In moving the report, the Elected Mayor informed the Council that Councillor G Bell had been replaced as a member of the Committee by Councillor T Mulvenna.

It was moved by Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor C Burdis that:

- (1) Councillor K Clark be appointed as Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee for the remainder of the 2017-18 Municipal Year; and
- (2) Councillor L Spillard be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee for the remainder of the 2017-18 Municipal Year.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 45 votes for and 6 abstentions

### **C54/11/17 Common Seal**

**Resolved** that the Common Seal be affixed to all deeds and documents required for carrying into effect the various decisions of the Council made since its last meeting.

### **C55/11/17 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair made announcements with regards to the following events that she attended:

- The Chairs Charity Walk around North Shields on 30 September
- Involvement in Local Democracy Week, including chairing the Youth Council meeting
- VODA volunteer presentations and Britain in Bloom
- Remembrance Services and attendance at a World War 1 Commemoration Project event at The Linkskill Centre for the installation of a poppy sculpture to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Arras.

### **C56/11/17 Mayor's Announcements**

The Elected Mayor was pleased to announce that the Government have agreed proposals for a North of Tyne devolution deal.

She stated that this is a landmark deal that will devolve powers and very substantial funding down from Government to North Tyneside, working together with Newcastle and Northumberland.

The proposals give us more power and control of funding to:

- support and nurture world-leading businesses
- drive economic growth
- create more and better jobs
- help our residents to get into these jobs with the skills they need
- enable people to have a decent affordable home
- create an area that is well-connected, vibrant and thriving

Having a new directly elected Mayor for the area will give us a strong voice at the national and international table. Without this we will fall further behind other regions who already have devolution deals and we will not be able to compete.

The minded-to deal will be formally launched on 24 November, but it is a minded-to deal at this stage. That is because, as with all devolution deals, the changes to governance arrangements that will be required to actually implement the deal are subject to consultation.

Cabinet will agree the start of the consultation process in December. The consultation process will run until the end of January and will involve all local authorities in the North East region, the public and all key stakeholders.

Consultation on three areas of proposed governance changes will take place:

- first, for the three North of Tyne authorities to leave the existing North East Combined Authority
- second, for the three North of Tyne authorities to establish a new Combined Authority with a new Directly Elected Mayor
- third, the proposed arrangements for how the new Combined Authority will operate

At the end of the consultation process, each of the three North of Tyne authorities will be asked to approve the consultation outcome to be submitted to Government. Government will then seek final approvals to the new arrangements and the North East Combined Authority will be asked to consent to the new arrangements.

The Mayor reiterated that the proposals in this deal provide us with the powers and funding we need to make a real and lasting difference to the people and businesses of North Tyneside. It will change lives and will improve the things we know that are important to them.

The consultation process will ensure that everyone can have their say but she was also very clear that we also need to make sure that the arrangements are the right ones for North Tyneside residents and businesses before we finally agree.

## **C57/11/17 Questions by Members of the Council**

### **1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor J Wallace**

Can the Elected Mayor tell me if any transactions between the Council and the North Tyneside Trading Company or its subsidiaries have been so arranged or will be so arranged as to reduce or minimise the payments of taxes and duties?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

I can assure you that no such arrangements have been made.

I have made sure we have taken appropriate external professional advice on various matters including Tax, VAT, Corporation Tax and Stamp Duty Land Tax and made sure that all of the transactions are in line with tax legislation.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor K Barrie

Can the Mayor confirm she is putting a further £2 million into this year's budget to improve our roads and pavements and due to the current financial position of the budget can the Mayor tell us if she will be borrowing or using the airport dividends to pay for the work?

Councillor Harrison replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Yes we have included £2million into our budget for investment in our Roads and Pavements during 2017/18. This is in line with all other funding from the Capital Plan and will be funded through borrowing of £1.727m and external funding secured of £0.273m.

I have been advised by the Cabinet Member for Finance that this does not affect the Airport dividend which we currently hold in the Strategic Reserve. The appropriate use of this reserve will be considered as part of the Budget and Financial Planning Process.

Councillor Barrie asked the following supplementary question:

In the light of the Mayor's acknowledgement of the dire state of the footpaths that the Conservatives highlighted in the budget debates, and since officers have confirmed that some money originally designated for road repairs has now been diverted to pavements, can the Elected Mayor tell us which roads will not now be repaired and what steps she will be taking to remedy that? Would it not have been better to repair both as the Conservatives wanted to do?

Councillor Harrison replied as follows:

Since the Mayor was elected she has been very clear on the need for not only repairing our roads, but also repairing our pavements. The intention is to ensure we do this through our Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), within which we have identified the needs for our roads and the specific needs for some of our pavements. Under the guidance of the Mayor we are looking at areas around our schools where we think it's important that we try to repair pavements, and older people's accommodation or other busy areas. The moneys are included in that budget. It will not affect the HAMP itself. You will soon be seeing the programme of works to be carried out within your own ward, Cullercoats. Other Councillors will be receiving details as we roll out the HAMP itself over the coming weeks.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor K Barrie

Can the Mayor tell me who changed the North Tyneside Council Logo and what consultation took place and when?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

I am sure that Councillor Barrie could have asked officers this question outside of the Council meeting and would have been reassured that the Council logo has not changed. The Council crest remains as our corporate logo.