

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

22 November 2018

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 22 November 2018 at 6.00 pm in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

Present

Councillor T Mulvenna (In the Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor A Austin	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor G Bell	Councillor J Kirwin
Councillor L Bell	Councillor K Lee
Councillor K Bolger	Councillor F Lott
Councillor T Brady	Councillor W Lott
Councillor S Brockbank	Councillor G Madden
Councillor P Brooks	Councillor M Madden
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor P Mason
Councillor C Burdis	Councillor P McIntyre
Councillor D Cox	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor S L Cox	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor N Craven	Councillor J Mole
Councillor EN Darke	Councillor A Newman
Councillor L Darke	Councillor K Osborne
Councillor C Davis	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor S Day	Councillor A Percy
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor S Phillips
Councillor P Earley	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor S Graham	Councillor M Reynolds
Councillor M A Green	Councillor W Samuel
Councillor M Hall	Councillor L Spillard
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor J I Walker
Councillor N J Huscroft	Councillor J Wallace

C45/11/18 Public Questions

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr James Christie from Wallsend

In relation to the recent cabinet meeting (Ref: CAB56/10/18), the North Tyneside Network Management Plan makes reference to “*offering improved connectivity, reliability and demand management across all modes of transport, the Authority aimed to operate and develop a network that could “manage the peaks” and deliver a consistent and reliable experience to all road users*”. Two further references were made in that there was “*limited opportunities to network capacity improvement schemes to address congestion*” and that “*increased congestion on the highway network contributed to poor air quality*” (the latter point made is a national issue). The parking of motor vehicles on pavements, throughout the Borough, does not incentivise people, without access to motor vehicles, to use the highway network confidently and securely.

My question, in relation to this, is as motor traffic congestion is directly linked to the poor air quality and congestion, how will the council address the lack of a Netherlands-style pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the Borough? This would encourage more people to leave their motor vehicles at home, encourage children to get out on their bikes, improve air quality in the Borough and systematically ease the burden on the NHS Trusts that serve the area?

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

Thank you Mr Christie. I am pleased that you have noted the contents of our new Network Management Plan, approved by Cabinet last month.

This is just one of a number of plans and strategies that we have introduced over the last 18 months following the introduction of an overarching Transport Strategy.

A common theme in these strategies and plans is our aim to enable a shift to more sustainable methods of travel and you’ll be pleased to hear this is strongly influencing our investment plans.

North Tyneside has experienced sustained and substantial growth in cycling over the last 10 years. In fact the number of people cycling in North Tyneside has actually trebled in the past decade. I am confident the recently adopted Cycling Strategy and associated Design Guide, approved by Cabinet in March, will continue to support increased cycling through delivering safe, well designed infrastructure.

Improving the condition of our footways is a priority for the Elected Mayor and is receiving significant investment with a particular focus on areas of high footfall such as town centres. We have also successfully delivered a range of footway reconstruction and replacement schemes.

Some of the significant improvements to our cycling infrastructure include:

- the Coast Road Cycle Route that cuts across the borough, and
- cycling links to and from Cobalt Business Park, a major employment hub

Both of these included improved crossing facilities for both cycling and walking. Indeed, the Cobalt cycling scheme won the Robert Stephenson Award from the Institution of Civil

Engineers this year and has helped people safely cycle and walk around the area by providing pedestrian and cycle 'parallel crossings', similar to those used in the Netherlands.

Also helping our young people to choose sustainable transport is particularly important. Our 'Go Smarter' programme is promoting cycling and walking in North Tyneside schools. One of the 'Go Smarter' initiatives actually involves school pupils looking at the routes to their school and identifying where cycling and walking improvements can be made.

The Council have appointed a Cycling Champion, Councillor Sarah Day who is looking at even more ways of encouraging people to take part in everyday cycling.

We are also working with officers to pursue a number of funding opportunities to improve a number of our Strategic Cycling Routes and also to increase Electric Vehicle charging points within the borough's car parks.

In addition, improving the condition of our footways is a Mayoral priority that is receiving significant investment with a particular focus on areas of high footfall such as town centres, and we have successfully delivered a range of footway reconstruction and replacement schemes.

Mr Christie asked the following supplementary question:

The Department of Transport cycling and walking investment strategy was released this morning. Part of the strategy was encouraging local authorities to spend at least 15% of their Highway Infrastructure budget specifically on cycling and walking schemes around their areas of responsibility. So what will the Authority be doing in relation to what the Department of Transport has released today and will you follow up on the recommendations on Council spend?

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

Thank you for highlighting that. Officers have already raised this and we will be looking at it, but obviously as it's been released this morning we haven't had the chance to look at that. But the main part of our transforming city fund bid revolves around active travel so three different schemes – we're talking over £1million in total so the Tyne view corridor that runs parallel to the Tyne and connects to the Tyne pedestrian tunnel is a major scheme that is reopening soon, which will bring cycling and walking links into the pedestrian tunnel.

Cobalt Park here to Northumberland Park is a major scheme that brings people off motor vehicles and allows them to walk into the village and also significant investment across transport routes and our cycling routes along the wagonways. We are looking at significant investment there and bidding for transforming cities for them.

So yes we are looking at them, thank you for highlighting the Department of Transport strategy. Our officers have already raised this and we will get back to you in writing as to what we are going to do in the future. As the strategy was only released this morning we haven't had time to assess it but we will do so.

C46/11/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, J Cassidy, K A Clark, P Oliver and F Weetman.

C47/11/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A McMullen declared a registerable personal interest in relation to The Licensing Act 2003 – Draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2018- 2023 (Minute C53/11/18) as he was a Personal Licence holder.

C48/11/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 September 2018 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C49/11/18 Motions

(1) Motion 1 signed by Councillors S Brockbank, P McIntyre and A Austin

It was moved by Councillor S Brockbank and seconded by Councillor P McIntyre that:

This Council notes and welcomes the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) as well as increased investment as part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent budget.

Although the original plan for the region would have included those Local Authorities south of the Tyne, the plans for the NTCA allow for:

- The generation of £1.1 billion for the regional economy over
- The ability to attract investment of over £2.1 billion from the private sector businesses;
- 10,000 new jobs;
- The sharing of appropriate Council services across boundaries, as well as resources, skill and personnel.

The NTCA budget was presented amongst a raft of other positive announcements for the UK economy, with increased investment for public services and recognition of an increase in GDP of the UK.

Council welcomes these developments and requests the Elected Mayor to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to thank him of his continued commitment to this important regional development opportunity.

An amendment was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor C Burdis to read as follows:

This Council notes and welcomes the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA).

Although the original plan for the region would have included those Local Authorities south of the Tyne, the plans for the NTCA allow for:

- The generation of £1.1 billion for the regional economy
- The ability to attract investment of over £2.1 billion from the private sector businesses;
- 10,000 new jobs;
- The sharing of appropriate Council services across boundaries, as well as resources, skill and personnel.

The historic devolution agreement for North of the Tyne has taken many years and a lot of hard work to achieve. Council congratulates the Elected Mayor Norma Redfearn together with the leader of Newcastle Councillor Nick Forbes, Northumberland County Council Leader Councillor Peter Jackson, the previous Leader of Northumberland County Council Councillor Grant Davey together with our MPs Mary Glindon and Alan Campbell and the NELEP and regional businesses. The Council acknowledges the support given by Jake Berry MP to ensure our ambitions could be achieved.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 49 votes to 0 votes.

A further amendment was moved by Councillor J Wallace and seconded by Councillor A Austin, as follows:

To add after Alan Campbell: "Guy Opperman MP and Anne Marie Trevelyan MP".

Following discussion, at the suggestion of the mover of the original amendment, the mover and seconder of the further amendment agreed to alter the amendment by deleting "Guy Opperman MP and Anne Marie Trevelyan MP" and replacing 'together with our MPs Mary Glindon and Alan Campbell' with "together with all MPs North of the Tyne".

The motion, as amended, to read as follows:

This Council notes and welcomes the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA).

Although the original plan for the region would have included those Local Authorities south of the Tyne, the plans for the NTCA allow for:

- The generation of £1.1 billion for the regional economy
- The ability to attract investment of over £2.1 billion from the private sector businesses;
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The historic devolution agreement for North of the Tyne has taken many years and a lot of hard work to achieve. Council congratulates the Elected Mayor Norma Redfearn together with the leader of Newcastle Councillor Nick Forbes, Northumberland County Council Leader Councillor Peter Jackson, the previous Leader of Northumberland County Council Councillor Grant Davey together with all MPs North of the Tyne and the NELEP and regional businesses. The Council acknowledges the support given by Jake Berry MP to ensure our ambitions could be achieved.

The Motion, as amended, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

(2) Motion 2 signed by Councillors L Spillard, M Hall and M Green

It was moved by Councillor L Spillard and seconded by Councillor M Hall that:

This Council believes that the continuing cuts in public health funding are a false economy. The consequence of the cuts result in people suffering reduced health and wellbeing, extra demand on local health services and the local economy picking up the cost of increased absence and poor productivity.

Our most deprived areas suffer the worst health outcomes, there is a significant difference in life expectancy of 10 years between the most affluent and most deprived wards of the borough. So it is vital that these areas with the greatest need receive sufficient funding so that we can bridge the health gap.

We support Cancer Research UK's call for increased and sustainable public health funding and this Council requests the Mayor and Cabinet to call for the Government to deliver increased investment in public health and to support a sustainable health and social care system by taking a 'prevention first' approach.

North Tyneside Council will continue to support and fund public health initiatives to the best of our abilities to prevent ill-health, reduce inequalities and support a health and social care system that is fit for the future.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 50 votes to 0 votes.

(3) Motion 3 signed by Councillors A Newman, R Glindon and A McMullen

It was moved by Councillor A Newman and seconded by Councillor R Glindon that:

In the last 8 years North Tyneside Council have had to make savings of £120 million, and this year faces a funding shortfall of £13.5 million. Councils were at the forefront of austerity, yet despite claims of the end of austerity, the Chancellor has confirmed the £1.5 billion cut to council budgets next year. Although there is some additional money available it still amounts to large scale cuts.

We continue to face significant funding gaps and rising demand for adult social care and children's services. Like all other councils we have had to divert significant resources towards delivering these services. This results in a lack of resources to fund the other services our residents rely on, like running libraries, leisure centres, cleaning streets and maintaining our environment, parks and open spaces. We continue to face huge uncertainty about how we will pay for local services into the next decade and beyond.

The Council therefore asks the Mayor and Cabinet to consider writing to the Chancellor asking that he ensures that the forthcoming Spending Review delivers a fair and sustainable funding settlement for local government that protects the services valued by our residents.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 50 votes to 6 votes.

C50/11/18 Designation of Head of Paid Service

The Chair informed the Council that he had agreed to a report on the designation of Head of Paid Service to be considered at this meeting as an urgent item of business to allow Council to consider this matter at the earliest opportunity following the meeting of the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee held on 15 November 2018 at which Mr Paul Hanson's appointment as Chief Executive had been made.

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

Council designate Mr Paul Hanson, Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service on an on-going basis.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

C51/11/18 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 2019/20.

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 2019/20 financial year.

The Chair thanked the Panel for the report.

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

Council approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel that no changes be made to the current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

C52/11/18 The Gambling Act 2005 – Draft Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) 2019 – 2022

Council gave consideration to the Statement of Licensing Policy 2019-2022. The Policy provided guidance as to how the Authority would exercise its functions under the Gambling Act 2005 and had proved to be a vital part of the licensing of gambling activities and had a positive impact on licensing. The report outlined the final proposals to Council for the formal approval of the revised Policy.

It was moved by Councillor C Burdis and seconded by Councillor W Samuel that:

Council:

- (1) approve the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling) attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) make a 'no casino resolution' under section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

C53/11/18 The Licensing Act 2003 – Draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2018 - 2023

Council gave consideration to the Statement of Licensing Policy 2018-2023. The Policy provided guidance as to how the Authority exercised its functions under the Licensing Act 2003 and had proved to be a vital part of the licensing of alcohol and entertainment activities and had a positive impact on licensing. The report outlined the final proposals for Council's formal approval of the revised Policy.

It was moved by Councillor C Burdis and seconded by Councillor S Day that:

Council approve the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report, including the delegation scheme included in the Policy.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

C54/11/18 Approval of the North Tyneside Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

Council gave consideration to the recommendation of Cabinet that it should consider the recommendations of the Independent Examiner and approve the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging schedule and resolve that it should come into effect from 14 January 2019.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor S Cox that:

Council:

- (1) note that the Independent Examiner in his report to the Authority concludes that the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, with modifications, provides an appropriate basis for the collection of the levy; and
- (2) approves the adoption and subsequent publication of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule; and that the charges identified in the Charging Schedule should be levied against liable development from 14 January 2019.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 56 votes to 0 votes.

C55/11/18 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.

C56/11/18 Chair's Announcements

The Chair referred to a letter of apology received from Councillor J Allan in relation to a standards issue that had been circulated around the Chamber for Members' information.

He also commended officers of the Council for the organisation of the recent Armistice parades, and paid tribute to the huge numbers of residents that had attended various

events across the borough. He also thanked staff, Councillors, the Young Mayor and youth councillors for their participation in the commemorations.

C57/11/18 Elected Mayor's Announcements

The Elected Mayor expressed concern at comments made by some Members during consideration of the Motions earlier in the meeting and reiterated her view that the purpose of being a councillor was to do the best for the people that they served and to act on their behalf.

She was delighted that Paul Hanson had now taken up the role as the Council's Chief Executive permanently, and during the time he had served as Acting Chief Executive he had led the Council extremely well, continuing to demonstrate his passion for ensuring that excellent services were delivered to the borough's residents.

She also referred to the budget setting process and in particular to the precepting arrangements in the light of an email she had received from a Conservative Member suggesting greater support should be provided to the Police from the Council's own budget despite the Government having cut funding to policing in the Northumbria area.

The Elected Mayor was pleased that the Council had been able to amend its current Equality and Diversity Policy to include the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism and she had received an extremely positive response from the Jewish members of the Holocaust Memorial Day Working Group about this.

She was also pleased that the Government had now realised the benefits of breakfast clubs, which had been introduced in North Tyneside when John Harrison was Mayor and she was Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, but had been stopped in 2009 when there was a change in administration within the Council.

The introduction of breakfast clubs meant that thousands of children across the country would now have a healthy and nutritious start to the day, which the Mayor stated was important to the learning process.

C58/11/18 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor S Brockbank

Can the Elected Mayor tell Council how much extra investment is now available for pothole repairs following the recent Budget?

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

Because of the good work by officers in the Council we have been assessed by the Department for Transport (DfT) as a band 3 local highway authority – the highest achievable rating. Being in this band allows us to receive the full DfT incentive fund allocation and in the recent budget we have received an allocation of £136,000 from the Pothole Action Fund, which is the only fund in the budget specifically for potholes.

Councillor S Brockbank asked the following supplementary question:

So would the Elected Mayor or the Cabinet Member then welcome this extra investment and publicly thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for that?

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

While any additional funding is welcome in a time when the Government has slashed local government funding despite this extra funding and additional capital investment by this Authority, there is still a backlog of £20 million in highways maintenance. This £136,000 goes nowhere near covering the shortfall and meeting the needs of the Authority, despite the additional investment and making this a priority of the Mayor and Cabinet of this Authority.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor S Brockbank

Can the Elected Mayor inform Council how the £600 million promised for the North of Tyne Combined Authority will impact on North Tyneside specifically please?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

I would just like to make it very clear, because I see my role is to do the best for the residents in North Tyneside, and I have to say I was grateful. We were actually suffering terribly in North Tyneside to do anything for our residents. So I would be grateful to anybody, no matter who it was, as long as it was above board and legal. I would happily take any money to help our residents.

It certainly doesn't make up for all the money we have lost in the past, not at all but I don't know what our residents would think of me if I didn't accept some help to make things better for them, even though it doesn't meet what we have already lost.

I just said I'm grateful that the North of Tyne Combined Authority has finally come into being. It was hard fought to get us to where we are, it was not easy. We went back time and time to the Treasury to get the funding that we deserved and we were refused and it was only when Jake Berry MP came on our side and he said he would fight our cause that we actually got a deal that we could work with that would be of benefit to our residents.

The new powers and funding it brings to the area will mean that North Tyneside will be able to deliver the things that are important to our residents. It was the leaders and the deputy leaders that decided what we were going to do with this money. It wasn't based on what we wanted. It was based on the needs of the residents here in North Tyneside. It was based on the needs of the businesses and the people who have been telling us over the last five or six years.

Things that simply would otherwise not be possible given the extremely difficult financial position we find ourselves in thanks to the harsh reductions in funding from this Government that we have had to sustain over the past number of years and you all know that, that is the truth and you cannot deny it and of course you know and despite the fact that we have been told that austerity is ending, it is continuing.

So whilst this funding for the new Combined Authority in no way makes up for the sustained cuts imposed on us by the Government, we firmly believe that it offers an opportunity to do the best we can for the people we serve and that's why we are here.

Specifically for North Tyneside, this devolution deal means

- the ability to support and nurture our talent, our people and our businesses from those that are one person with a dream to those that are world-leaders
- being able to accelerate economic growth and create more and better jobs
- helping our residents to get those jobs with the skills they need
- helping people to have a decent affordable home, a home they can afford
- creating an area that is well-connected, vibrant and thriving where once again we continue to care for our place and look after our environment and look after the environment for future generations, but more importantly giving everyone a stake in the future.

I am absolutely sure that the new Combined Authority is wasting no time in getting on with things. At the first meeting we announced early funding priorities for:-

- an inward investment fund to attract foreign and UK businesses to invest and create jobs in the North of the Tyne
- a growth fund supporting rural communities to thrive
- projects to help young people gain the STEM and digital skills they need to succeed in the modern economy
- a new partnership to help social housing tenants and people who provide care for others who have been out of work for a long time to get back into work.

We also announced work to develop detailed funding bids for a range of projects including town centre redevelopment for North Shields and the Fish Quay. We also put forward a project looking at bringing back to life the Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle railway, which is much needed, especially as we have businesses and housing being built along that area.

I am sure that you would agree that this, and the whole of the vision as set out by the new Authority, will have very significant benefit to the people of North Tyneside.

I would like to reiterate, it was a hard fought fight and it was Jake Berry MP who helped us to get on that ladder.

Acknowledging the determination shown by the Leaders of Northumberland and Grant Davey at the outset, Newcastle and myself in achieving this deal for our area, he suggests that our ambition and dedication on behalf of our communities should be strongly commended. That's what we are here for, doing the best for our residents.

Councillor S Brockbank asked the following supplementary question:

I'm not sure you answered the specific question about the £600 million, but I'm guessing it's not yet decided, it's still in flux, would that be accurate?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

At the end of the day what we are doing is feasibility studies and this has been happening for a long time and nothing can be done until we know what funding is needed, but those are the things that we are working on.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor W Samuel

Can the Mayor comment on claims by some political groups that there is a large budget surplus and reserves that can be spent?

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

After taking into consideration all those reserves that are for specific purposes such as Housing Revenue Account; Schools; Grants; PFI Contracts; and Insurances, we have two reserves left. Just over £4m which is there to help the Council change how it delivers services and just over £14m in the Strategic Reserve which is there to support day to day financial risk in the Council's general fund budget.

This reserve represents only 2% of the gross spend of the General Fund, which is low, when considering the complexity of the services that the Authority delivers.

Councillor W Samuel asked the following supplementary question:

Leaflets continue to come through my door suggesting that there are large amounts of money to be spent.

Can you remind us of the comments from the Legal and Section 151 Officers about the reckless use of reserves and how the Authority's financial stability could be affected by the use of reserves?

Councillor R Glindon responded as follows:

Thank you for your supplementary question. You may recall that at the Council meeting on 15 February 2018 advice was given in relation to the Notice of Objection from the Conservative group which highlighted the significant risk to the Authority's financial position by using reserves to prop up the budget.

Whilst the Authority's Strategic Reserve and Change Reserve have increased in recent years, the Authority's level of reserves is still low by comparison with similar local authorities.

I have some further background information for you that I want to read out because it is really important that the public understand the amount of reserves we are able to touch.

In 2017/18 we ended the year with a small surplus for the General Fund of £722,000. I say this is small when compared to the Authority's gross expenditure of close to half a billion pounds.

With this small surplus we increased the General Fund balances by £200,000 and put the remainder into the Strategic Reserve.

In terms of our reserves, included in the statement of accounts at the end of 2017/18 were £100.395m of useable reserves. Of this £13.457m relates to capital and cannot be used for revenue purposes.

And included in this figure is £28.903m relating to the Housing Revenue Account, which absolutely cannot be used for the General Fund as you all know.

This leaves just over £58million in the General Fund, this is made up of:

- £3.356m is school balances which the General Fund cannot touch
- £6.804m General Fund balances – our absolutely rainy day/disaster money
- £2.765m are grant reserves that have to be spent on specific items and if not used can be clawed back.
- £26.617m which are ring-fenced reserves for things like our PFIs where we have to manage the cash we get from central government over the life of the agreement and cannot be touched.

This leaves £18.492m. Of this £4.019m is the Change Reserve, which we have been using throughout the year to change the way we work.

The final balance of £14.470m is the Strategic Reserve. The Strategic Reserve is there to manage risks identified by the Authority in delivering its budget and at 2% of the gross turnover is relatively low considering the risks the Authority has to manage.

So all the leaflets that are going out, I think some people will have to answer to the statement I have made here tonight. We are not afloat with reserves, we are carrying the lowest reserves that we can to ensure we can fund any risk that comes along.

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor K Bolger

Is the Mayor aware that a pilot scheme in Aberdeen to provide free sanitary items for women and girls in low income households began in August 2017. In North Ayrshire a decision was taken where all secondary schools in that local authority area were given access to free sanitary protection from August 2017. Can the Mayor outline what actions are being taken in North Tyneside to tackle period poverty?

Councillor P Earley responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I know that we are working as a Council with VODA and the Red Box project to provide Red boxes in secondary schools, which will contain fresh underwear and sanitary products. The boxes are already in a number of schools and I believe the plan is to have a Red Box in every secondary school by March 2019.

The scheme has ambitions to also provide similar boxes in libraries and customer care centres across North Tyneside in due course. We are also trying to raise awareness of this problem with an article in a forthcoming Council magazine to raise public donations for sanitary products so we can put more of these boxes in more places.

The Elected Mayor also commented as follows:

The Council have been working on this for some time, Councillor Hall and Councillor Janet Hunter have been working with our Public Health people and VODA to make this happen and there is a great deal of work going on. I think many of our schools at present are working to expand the scheme and we are looking at expanding it into Council buildings and within community centres. I am grateful to Councillor Hall and Councillor Janet Hunter for their work along with our officers.

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor Brian Burdis

Can the Mayor inform the Council of any progress on extending the garden waste scheme to those areas of the Borough that at present do not have this facility?

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

Firstly, I think it is important to remember that the Mayor scrapped the charge suggested by the previous administration in relation to the garden waste scheme as soon as she came into power.

We know that the garden waste service is valued by those residents who are able to take advantage of it and I know that the Mayor has received a number of requests from people who have recently purchased homes with medium and large gardens in North Tyneside, asking if the scheme can be extended to where they live.

In response to these requests, the Mayor asked me to work with officers, to explore if this popular scheme could be extended. We have considered the options available for expanding the scheme, and I am pleased to announce that we can and will be expanding this valued service to include households built in recent years with medium and large gardens.

We are in the process of writing to all of these households informing them of the expansion of the scheme. This means an additional 1,000 properties will be able to access this service, increasing the number of households who will receive this service across the borough to 73,000 from March 2019.

And I am pleased to say that the scheme is still available at no cost to residents unlike our neighbouring councils.

Councillor B Burdis asked the following supplementary question:

Could the Cabinet Member inform Council how the alternative weekly collection is progressing?

Councillor C Johnson responded as follows:

I am pleased to report that Alternate Weekly Collections are going extremely well.

From the start of Alternate Weekly Collections at the end of August up until the end of October this year, recycling is up by 5% compared to the same period last year. There has also been a considerable drop in household waste with over 1000 tonnes less collected from household green bins, compared to the same period last year.

These figures are very positive and show that Alternate Weekly Collections is having the desired effect, impacting positively on the environment and helping to reduce costs associated with the disposal of waste. It costs 10 times more to dispose of household waste than it does to recycle. The expansion of the garden waste collection service will further help improve recycling across the borough.

Residents have made a huge effort to minimise their waste and make recycling part of their daily routine and they deserve enormous credit for this.

6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Drummond

Would the Mayor join me in congratulating all of those involved in the restoration of the war memorials and the organisation of the Remembrance Day events?

Councillor G Bell responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

As the Armed Forces Champion, it was a great honour to be appointed by the Mayor in 2013 and we have done some real good work since then.

I would like to thank the officers of the Council team who have done really well over the last couple of months. There have been lots meetings about the memorials being in pristine condition for the 100 years celebration.

All the war memorials in the borough have had some remedial works and I hope when you attended services you noticed the work that had been done.

I must thank in particular Carol Girvan who works in the civic office. She works tirelessly at this time of year working with the Royal British Legion in Forest Hall and Whitley Bay and making sure services go ahead properly and on time.

There were services this year from Church Services at Killingworth on the Thursday night. We went to schools on the Friday and most Councillors would have attended those, we went to Killingworth Jigsaw on the Saturday and Civic Services all around the borough on the Sunday.

These were attended by thousands of people and we won't forget. We will remember them today as if it was yesterday. We will never forget them.