

## **Local Government Act 1972**

### **Borough of North Tyneside**

**17 January 2019**

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 17 January 2019 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 J Allan	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor A Austin	Councillor J Kirwin
Councillor G Bell	Councillor K Lee
Councillor L Bell	Councillor F Lott
Councillor K Bolger	Councillor W Lott
Councillor T Brady	Councillor G Madden
Councillor S Brockbank	Councillor M Madden
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor P Mason
Councillor C Burdis	Councillor P McIntyre
Councillor J Cassidy	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor D Cox	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor S Cox	Councillor J Mole
Councillor N Craven	Councillor A Newman
Councillor E Darke	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor L Darke	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor C Davis	Councillor A Percy
Councillor S Day	Councillor S Phillips
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor P Earley	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor M Reynolds
Councillor S Graham	Councillor W Samuel
Councillor M A Green	Councillor L Spillard
Councillor M Hall	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor J Harrison	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor J Walker
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor J Wallace
Councillor N J Huscroft	

### **C59/01/19 Minute's Silence**

A minute's silence was observed in respect of the passing of former Councillors Lawrence Goveas MBE, Councillor for Cullercoats Ward from 1974 until 2011, Honorary Alderman and prior to 1974 served as Tynemouth Borough Councillor and Alex Cowie, Councillor for Weetslade Ward from 2010 until 2014.

### **C60/01/19 Whitley Bay Town Cup**

The Chair announced that the Whitley Bay Town Cup had been awarded to Whitley Bay Sporting Club. He presented the Cup to Mr Robert Nixon representing the Sporting Club.

Mr Nixon addressed the Council and thanked the Authority for awarding the Cup to the Whitley Bay Sporting Club.

### **C61/01/19 Public Questions**

#### **1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Hawkins**

What are the perceived benefits of moving the Shields ferry landing from North Shields to Royal Quays?

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

Thank you for your question. Can I first of all make it clear that we are not moving the ferry landing from North Shields to Royal Quays.

The Council have been talking to NEXUS about the work they must do to the Ferry Landing in North Shields and the possibilities for the future.

As part of those conversations NEXUS are looking at the site of the current landing and whether it would be beneficial to move it closer to North Shields Fish Quay. In addition, we have spoken about whether a new weekend service to the Marina at Royal Quays might work, given the huge number of visitors who arrive via the Port of Tyne ferry port terminal and the opportunity to connect with Royal Quays and the surrounding area.

There are no plans to change the current service that is so important to people who travel between North Shields and South Shields for work and pleasure. As part of our work on the regeneration of North Shields and the Fish Quay the Chief Executive and the Deputy Mayor are looking at opportunities to support the growing business confidence around North Shields Fish Quay as a popular food and drink destination as part of our ambitions plans for North Tyneside.

Ms Hawkins asked the following supplementary question:

I presume there will be a public consultation. Could you give us some idea as to when?

Councillor Johnson responded as follows:

We are not planning on moving it away from North Shields Fish Quay. Our discussion was very much regards to introducing a triangle service on a weekend as opposed to moving the ferry landing from North Shields Fish Quay to Royal Quays. So as there is no current

plans to move the ferry terminal at the moment there will be no public consultation. If in the future there are plans to move the ferry landing on North Shields Fish Quay a public consultation will be undertaken.

The Chair announced that a joint response would be provided to questions 2 and 3 below.

## **2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Radbourne**

As the driving force within the Council would it be possible for you to tell me what commitment you and your cabinet have for the future of the St Mary's nature reserve, both in terms of overall management strategies and specifically balancing visitor attendance whilst reducing wildlife disturbance levels?

## **3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Bennett**

St. Mary's Island Nature Reserve is to me the jewel in North Tyneside's crown. To have such a wonderful wilderness so close to urbanisation is truly a precious thing for all those that enjoy being amongst nature.

Nature reserves and other open spaces places help wildlife thrive whilst providing people with areas where they can reap the benefits of the natural world.

When local authorities declare an LNR they take on the duty of care to manage and look after the site. It is therefore the responsibility of the local authority to ensure visitor pressure is managed in a way that alleviates damage and disturbance caused to the wildlife habitats on these protected sites.

SMSW and its growing team of volunteers from the North Tyneside area has dedicated many thousands of volunteer hours to help maintain the delicate and often precarious balance between visitors and the wildlife on this much-loved site, maximising the visitor appeal whilst helping to safeguard the natural environment and the wildlife it supports.

SMSW anticipates continuing its commitment to our local wildlife and the many thousands of visitors who come to enjoy it. Whilst we applaud measures put in place by NTC to help alleviate, to some extent, the impact of visitor pressure we know these measures are not enough. A convincing commitment by North Tyneside Council to realise its management responsibility and fully address the impact of visitor pressure on the wildlife habitats of this reserve is essential for the future of this site.

As the driving force within the Council would it be possible for you to tell me what commitment you and your cabinet have for the future of this nature reserve, both in terms of overall management strategies and specifically reducing wildlife disturbance levels?

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

I can absolutely assure you that the Council is absolutely committed to managing this important area and has commissioned an independent expert ecologist to produce an Ecological Management Plan for the Local Nature Reserve. Groups who have an interest in St Mary's Local Nature Reserve have been consulted on the plan which will be published in February 2019.

As a Council we recognise that there is a delicate balance to achieve between protecting the environment and encouraging sustainable tourism to a major heritage attraction, like

St. Mary's Lighthouse. However, we will continue to work with volunteers and groups in the area such as St Mary's Island Wetland Conservation Group (SMIWCG) to find an acceptable solution for the whole borough.

Mr Radbourne asked the following supplementary question:

As a member of the Seal Watch and the anticipated management plan that hopefully will be circulated in the next month, what do you see as the St Mary's Seal Watch role in that plan?

Councillor Johnson responded as follows:

As part of the plan we have consulted with every group that has an interest in the area and all views will be taken into account and when the plan is published next month it will become absolutely clear what we see people's roles are, what our role is and what other roles are currently there.

Ms Bennett asked the following supplementary question:

As we have already been waiting since 1992 for a management plan and management strategy for St Mary's Island Local Nature Reserve, can the Cabinet say on a scale to 1 - 10 what its level of commitment is?

Councillor Johnson responded as follows:

We can absolutely say that we will produce our report next month and it will show our commitment to the Nature Reserve and that we are committed to protecting St Mary's Island as an ecological destination and a tourism destination.

#### **4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Stevenson of Dudley**

I am considering the purchase of an electric or plug in hybrid vehicle and I would like to ask the Council if it is planning to apply for grants from the OLEV on street charging point scheme and would also ask what is this Council's policy on charging cables crossing public footpaths/highways if I was to have a home charger installed (I do not have access to off street parking)? The majority of housing in the area will not be able to utilise this technology and thereby reduce pollution without the ability to charge on street.

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

I am glad to hear that you are one of the increasing number of people who are considering purchasing an electric vehicle (EV).

Unfortunately, the Government do not offer full grant funding for the installation of charging points at 'on-street' locations and there is no grant funding available for on-street charging facilities for specific households. If the Government want more people to take up electric vehicles then they will have to consider the costs associated with this and offer funding regimes.

As I am sure you will appreciate this is not just an issue for North Tyneside but something which will affect every local authority across the country.

This is because the cost of digging up pavements to install cables is far beyond the resources that we have now or are likely to ever have in the future. Therefore this is a national problem. However, the Council can also not permit the installation of charging cables which cross public footways for safety reasons.

I would however like to highlight that supporting the growth in low carbon technologies is a policy priority of this Council. We have a commitment in our North Tyneside Transport Strategy to encourage wider adoption of low-carbon technologies, and our Local Plan states that wherever appropriate we will require developers to provide charging points for EVs as part of new developments in the Borough brought forward through the planning process.

Because of this in North Tyneside we already provide charging points for electric vehicles in several locations, including our public car parks at Whitley Bay and North Shields.

We are currently working in partnership with our neighbouring authorities in the North East exploring further opportunities to develop and improve public EV charging provision in our public car parks. This provides the best opportunity available to us as a local authority, to secure further visible and accessible EV charging facilities, in line with our strategic objectives.

Of course we will keep a watching brief on all potential funding streams in this area and will alert you to any future funding opportunities that become available.

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

Recently the Council made the decision to demolish the footbridge on Borough Road. What efforts have been made by the Council in order to preserve this footbridge to which many hundreds of people believe to be a part of the town's heritage and may an extension be made to this decision in order for local residents to attempt to find funding for repairing or replacing the bridge?

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

Thank you for your question. We have maintenance responsibility for over 100 bridges, over 900 kilometres of highway and 1200 kilometres of footpaths in the borough, which for a borough of our size is substantial, all of which require a regular inspection and maintenance regime.

In the Local Transport Plan we have to look after the 100 bridges and over 900 kilometres of highway and 1200 kilometres of footpaths. We now have an opportunity to bid for external or grant funding from the likes of the Department of Transport and Heritage Lottery Fund but unfortunately this bridge does not meet the criteria to access this type of funding.

Borough Road footbridge is a metal bridge that was built in the 1930's and unfortunately is fast approaching the end of its serviceable life. I think it's important to highlight that usage of the bridge has declined over the years. Surveys have shown that pedestrians tend to cross Borough Road at road level in the vicinity of the Addison Street junction and the bridge is crossed less than 100 times in any one day. Borough Road footbridge is also an anti-social behaviour black spot with regular reported incidents of dangerous and anti-social behaviour.

Obviously we, along with the Police try to manage this. In fact the Police installed a CCTV camera at this location last year in an attempt to capture anti-social behaviour evidence to take positive action, but unfortunately the camera was vandalised beyond repair within a few days of being installed.

There have been suggestions of raising the sides of the bridge to prevent objects being thrown over or installing nets either side of the bridge to manage the anti-social behaviour, but we haven't been able to arrive at an affordable or credible solution to this issue. It is a priority of the Council to maintain its roads and footpaths and bridges and we set out our priorities through our Highway Asset Management Plan. The key theme is to ensure our limited resources are targeted in the areas of greatest need and where the most benefit to highway and pedestrian users is gained. Difficult choices therefore have to be made in terms of managing the highway asset. In our HAMP we identified Tanners Bank Bridge as our strategic priority in the North Shields area. And we are currently, in partnership with Nexus, seeking funding from the Department of Transport. This will be used to reconstruct the Tanners Bank Bridge to give improved headroom, enabling public transport improvements serving North Shields Fish Quay supporting local shops, restaurants and businesses. This is in line with our strategic priorities.

Unfortunately, we have exhausted the potential funding avenues for Borough Road Bridge and I'm sorry to say again that this footbridge doesn't meet the criteria to access external funding.

The public have made it clear to the Mayor and the Mayor has made it clear to me that improving the condition of our footpaths and highways is a key priority - with footpaths where footfall is high and condition is poor our immediate investment priority. Spending what would be a massive amount of our limited Local Transport Plan funding on replacing Borough Road Bridge would be at odds with our current priorities and it would take much needed investment away from footpaths and highways that are used by North Tyneside residents every day.

In these challenging financial times we have to prioritise our resources as we can't afford to do everything we'd like to. The demolition of the bridge is now subject to planning permission and an application has been submitted. I have however asked officers not to progress the planning application until a new safe fit for purpose crossing has been agreed.

Of course, there is a formal consultation process attached to this where any comments and any objections received will inform a final decision.

I hope that you will see from my response this evening that as a Council we have limited resources available and are unable to do everything that we would like to, but have the best interests of the borough in mind when setting out investment priorities.

Mr Mill asked the following supplementary question:

The footbridge is 82 years old and there's been something going over the road for nigh on 200 years. When the bridge was initially built I believe it was given a lifespan of up to 130 years, which would give us another 50 years. How has the bridge been allowed to get into a state of disrepair in such a short time?

Councillor Johnson responded as follows:

The bridge may have been given that lifespan, however our surveys have shown that this bridge is coming towards the end of its life. The original lifespan has clearly deteriorated further than expected because of conditions. Of course when the bridge was originally built it was well used because Smiths Dock was still a working dock at the time. A lot of factors have contributed to the reduction in lifespan expected from the original time, however, the survey does show it is coming to the end of its serviceable life; that is a fact as opposed to an opinion.

#### **C62/01/19 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brooks, K Clark, E Hodson, K Osborne, A Waggott-Fairley and F Weetman.

#### **C63/01/19 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor W Samuel declared a registerable personal interest in relation C71/01/19 Question 2 - Questions by Members of the Council as his wife is a governor of Woodlawn School.

#### **C64/01/19 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 November 2018 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **C65/01/19 Safer North Tyneside Community Strategy 2019/2024 – Final Proposals**

Council gave consideration to a report that outlined the strategic priorities of the Safer North Tyneside Community Safety Partnership for the period 2019-2024. The strategy followed a comprehensive consultation exercise and committed the partnership to an annual Strategic Needs Assessment to identify specific areas of focus. The Strategy formed a part of the Authority's Policy Framework.

Councillor C Burdis, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement, welcomed the members of the partnership to the meeting who were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, they were:

Jeff Boath – Tyne and Wear Fire & Rescue Service  
Rebecca Ditchburn -Nexus for the North Tyneside area  
Lesley Pyle - Domestic Abuse Partnership  
Adrian Dracup – Clinical Commissioning Group  
Superintendent Janice Hutton – Northumbria Police  
Wendy Burke – Director of Public Health  
Phil Scott – North Tyneside Council

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

Council agree the final draft of the Safer North Tyneside Community Safety Strategy 2019-2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 55 votes to 0 votes.

### **C66/01/19 Designation to Statutory Roles**

Council gave consideration to the designation of an Officer of the Authority to the statutory role of Monitoring Officer and to allocate the roles of Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and Acting Returning Officer following the appointment of a new Head of Law and Governance.

It was moved by the Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor B Pickard that:

Council designate Mr Bryn Roberts, who has been appointed to the post of Head of Law and Governance, as the Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and Acting Returning Officer from 25 February 2019 when he commences his employment with the Authority.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 55 votes to 0 votes.

### **C67/01/19 Programme of Meetings 2019/20**

The Council received a report which presented the proposed programme of meetings for the 2019/20 municipal year, including designated Council meetings to hear public questions.

It was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor C Burdis that:

- (1) the programme of meetings for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (2) the meetings of the full Council proposed for 25 July 2019, 28 November 2019 and 16 January 2020 be those at which questions will be taken from members of the public; and
- (3) the Members' Support Group be asked to review the frequency and effectiveness of the members' briefings

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 55 votes to 0 votes.

### **C68/01/19 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.

### **C69/01/19 Chair's Announcements**

One of the Chair's charities aimed to ensure that all schools had defibrillators available in their school. The Chair announced that this had been achieved and thanked those staff and members for regularly contributing to the Chair's Charity lottery.

### **C70/01/19 Elected Mayor's Announcements**

The Elected Mayor referred to the recent appointments to senior positions within the Authority.

Bryn Roberts would commence employment as the Head of Law and Governance on 25 February 2019. Bryn had extensive experience as a Monitoring Officer at Middlesbrough Council, including working in a Mayoral Authority and as part of a Combined Authority.



John Sparkes had been appointed as the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development. He would be rejoining North Tyneside Council in March 2019 following a decade with Bridging Newcastle Gateshead and delivering significant regeneration work with South Tyneside Council.

James Moore had been appointed as Senior Communications and Marketing Manager. He would be joining the Authority from NJC Media and would commence his duties on 5 February 2019.

The Elected Mayor referred to an article in the Daily Telegraph on 4 January 2019 which named Whitley Bay and Tynemouth as one of the ten best British destinations to discover in 2019. So impressed was the reporter, it was named as the hotspot for 2019. A number of businesses from North Tyneside had been included in the article by travel experts and showed that the investment along the coast was really paying off. Attention would turn to regenerate other areas of the Borough.

National attention like this would help to attract even more visitors to the area and, in turn, bring more investment to the borough, helping the local economy to grow, thrive and prosper.

Finally the Elected Mayor thanked everyone involved in ensuring that the Borough's libraries and leisure centres remained in-house despite funding cuts over the last few years.

## **C71/01/19 Questions by Members of the Council**

### **1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor Alison Austin**

A recent report in both local and national newspapers named the 384 worst primary schools in England, schools where the Government's standards for performance across eight mainstream subjects including English and Maths had failed to be reached. Three of those schools were in North Tyneside, namely, Forest Hall Primary, Percy Main Primary and Monkseaton Middle schools.

Parents of pupils at those schools have understandably expressed their concerns - what assurances can the Mayor give that this issue will be investigated and measures taken to reverse the decline in performance?

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

The performance of our schools in North Tyneside is very important to the Elected Mayor, Cabinet and myself.

The newspaper report refers to outcomes for pupils at the end of year 6 and key stage 2.

Whilst our middle and primary schools had higher overall standards than those found nationally in 2018, we remain very focussed on those schools that did not perform as well.

You will of course be well aware that there have been schools in the borough that have underperformed in the past, including Monkseaton High School close to your own ward where we have worked with the school through our School Improvement Service to improve outcomes.

Also one of our schools in Whitley Bay was ranked in the top 10 secondary schools in the North East.

In relation to Forest Hall Primary School, I can advise you that an officer group meets regularly to support the school to bring about the improvements necessary. There has been strong improvement in early years and across key stage 1. Results in both phases were well above the national averages in 2018. The School Improvement Service continues to work with the school and is confident that the quality of provision will lead to improved outcomes in 2019. A review is due to be undertaken by the School Improvement Service later this term to confirm on going improvement.

In relation to Percy Main Primary School, the new school leaders and new governors are very focussed on rapidly improving outcomes. With significant support from the School Improvement Service, staff have begun to improve the quality of teaching, confirmed through a review by the School Improvement Service in December 2018.

With regards to Monkseaton Middle School, following the work of a national leader of education in the school during 2017-2018, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher took up post in September 2018. And again, the School Improvement Service is working intensively, in partnership with another national leader of education, to support improvement in the school. A review by the School Improvement Service will be held later in January to confirm improvements and determine what further action needs to be taken.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the hard work of the School Improvement Service who continue to maintain strong relationships with school leaders, governors and between other service providers in the Council such as Locality Teams. Because they know our schools as well they are able to support and challenge effectively.

The Service uses well-established processes such as a Raising Achievement Group which brings together key officers around a vulnerable school. They also utilise trusted professionals both on the team and from schools (such as National Leaders of Education) who have secure subject knowledge and significant experience to bring about sustained improvement across a wide range of school subjects and provision.

This is happening during a time when our schools are dealing with ever increasing pressures because of continued central government cuts.

It is worth noting that the Institute of Fiscal Studies reported in July 2018 that per pupil spending has fallen by 8% since 2010. Despite government promises these cuts in funding are set to continue with an estimated 5000 schools, one in four primary and one in six secondary schools facing a real terms cut in spending in 2019.

In addition we are on the verge of a recruitment crisis in secondary education. A report in May 2018 suggested by 2024 we will need an extra 47,000 secondary school teachers in England. Against this projection the number of trainee teachers fell by almost 25% last year. At the same time teachers are leaving the profession in increasing numbers.

Some 11% of secondary teachers left the state sector in the year to November. Only 48% of secondary classroom teachers in England have more than 10 years' experience compared to an international average of 64%. The number of people applying for post graduate teacher training in 2018/19 is down by a staggering 33% since last year. Also the

teacher development trust reported last year that school spending on teacher training has dropped for the first time this decade. Some schools have reduced spending on books, computers and other learning resources in an effort to try to provide adequate CPD for teachers.

Finally, it is worth remembering there are 79 schools in North Tyneside and 87% of young people attend a good or outstanding school compared to a national average of 85%, something of which we should be proud.

Councillor Austin asked the following supplementary question:

Thank you for the answer, all elected members have been rightly proud of the excellent schools we've had in the borough for a long time, however, some of the concerns that have been described to me by parents are very worrying and also buck the trend for England which is actually a trend of huge and impressive improvement in standards. I wondered if the Mayor would agree to report back to Full Council at a later date with details of the action plans for each school and whether they are succeeding in remedying the situation.

Councillor Earley responded as follows:

I don't have a problem with coming back to you once those action plans have been put in place and completed. There are a number of reviews going on in each of those schools, peer reviews to ensure standards are rising.

## **2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor Davey Drummond**

Would the Elected Mayor like to comment and also join Councillor Craven and I in congratulating the hard work and determination of pupils, staff and governors at Woodlawn School in Monkseaton South Ward following their recent OFSTED inspection moving from "needs improvement" to "Good"?

The Elected Mayor stated that there are a number of schools that get into trouble, but the improvement service work hard to bring them up to standard and this will continue to happen. Only yesterday the Government brought in another change for schools so we have to balance that every day as we go along. We have a fantastic improvement service that will support every school that fails but I think Woodlawn School has done tremendously well and I will definitely write to them, as I do to all schools that have come out of special measures, and congratulate the Head Teacher, the pupils and the staff because to get from where they were to 'Good' has been a tremendous amount of hard work.

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

Following on from my last answer this is an example of our partnership working to move the school from needs improvement to good. Like you Mayor, I'm very proud of the achievements of pupils, staff and governors at Woodlawn and it demonstrates how effective the support from our School Improvement Service can be working with our schools to gain some fantastic results both for the school and its pupils.

Woodlawn School has been on a journey of improvement over 4 years and I am delighted that Ofsted have now recognised the strong improvements and the high quality of education at the school.

Whilst the school is judged to be good overall, the report evaluates leadership and management and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils to be outstanding.

Ofsted noted that, *"The headteacher's strong and inspirational leadership has ensured that Woodlawn School has made rapid improvements. It now provides a good education for its pupils. She is ably supported by a cohesive team that is passionate about improving outcomes for its pupils. As a result of outstanding leadership, the school is improving at a pace."*

Regarding behaviour, Ofsted said that, *"Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils show awareness of the impact of their behaviours on others. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and respond very well to the school's rewards systems"*.

I will ensure that our congratulations are offered to the school on behalf of the Council to the Governors, the Headteacher, staff and pupils and their parents/carers.

I would also like to thank Councillors Drummond and Craven for their support to the school during this time.

### **3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor Matthew Thirlaway**

Would the North Tyneside Elected Mayor and our other representatives work to ensure the regeneration of the North bank of the Tyne is a priority for the new North of Tyne Combined Authority?

Councillor B Pickard responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Thank you for your question. Since the Mayor was elected in 2013 she has been working hard with the Cabinet and myself to make sure that the North Bank of the Tyne is a priority for this Authority, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and both the North East Combined Authority and now the new North of Tyne Combined Authority.

I can assure Councillor Thirlaway that the new North of Tyne Cabinet are very clear on the importance of the river to our economy.

As you know the North bank of the Tyne has some fantastic assets at Wallsend such as the World Heritage site at Segedunum, leading business such as SMD and Smulders, as well as local businesses such as WD Close, who we have supported in growing, winning new business and in creating high quality jobs.

We have also attracted world class businesses such as Rever Offshore, Saipem and ALE to the Swans Centre for Innovation while also accommodating local SMEs with growth potential.

The river also has the important transport links at the Tyne Tunnel and the Port of Tyne as well as the increasingly vibrant offer at North Shields Fish Quay.

We have used our powers and partnerships to secure investment in infrastructure; making it easier to travel to work along the river. An example of this is that North Tyneside Council have recently invested £4.7million on the North Bank to remove key transport barriers,

enabling industry to invest in available land along the River Tyne, and create additional capacity on the road network and improve safe cycling and pedestrian routes for the many.

I am delighted that through our Devolution Deal we now have access to substantial extra funding and additional powers that we would not have had previously.

The new Combined Authority is working quickly and decisively to make a real and positive impact on people's lives, businesses and local communities.

The North of Tyne economic vision sets out clearly what it will seek to achieve, and North Tyneside's ambitious regeneration plans can be made a reality much more quickly than ever before. We have much to deliver through the North of Tyne and I am sure that the Elected Mayor will be steering it through over the coming months as Interim Mayor of the Combined Authority.

Following the creation of the Combined Authority we are working in conjunction with the LEP to secure the final phases in the Swans site and in addition the North of Tyne Combined Authority have already prioritised specific work at Wallsend with Segedunum and at North Shields and the Fish Quay.

I can give you our assurances that we will continue to work with the new North of Tyne Authority to regenerate our Borough and to create the conditions needed for businesses to flourish and attract inward investment.

#### **4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor Matthew Thirlaway**

Would the Elected Mayor provide the Council with an update on the regeneration of Wallsend?

Councillor B Pickard responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I hope all Members took the opportunity to look at the report that Cabinet agreed on 26 November, which set out our ambition for North Tyneside.

In doing that we looked back at significant changes in Wallsend with investment in education, leisure, affordable housing, infrastructure and in the economy both in terms of work along the North Bank and in improving the town centre.

As we agreed at Cabinet, we want to support businesses and residents to create more and better jobs especially in the Wallsend area. Also connect those parts of the area that do not have strong transport links and we want to improve the housing offer and improve the sense of place and community and help to narrow the gap in life chances.

Right now we are delivering additional work on the Swans site, including expanding by another three floors the Swans Centre for Innovation. This is part of our wider, ongoing project to transform the former Swan Hunter shipyard into a hub for the offshore renewable energy and marine sectors.

There are also improvements in the transport network, affordable homes at the sites of the former Bonchester and Beadnell Courts as well as Purley Close and Perth Gardens as well as work to improve poor quality private rented homes.

Our next steps will be

- To develop a long-term Master Plan for Segedunum,
- Consider the options for the delivery of Swans,
- Continue to develop Wallsend Customer First Centre as a Community Hub,
- Work with private sector partners to see if we can refurbish the GB Hunter Memorial Hospital Building
- Refurbish and bring The Buddle back into use
- And continue to examine other opportunities for affordable homes.

I look forward to updating Council on these projects as they start to take shape.