

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

21 January 2016

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 21 January 2016 in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say:

Present

Councillor G Bell (In the Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor JM Allan	Councillor John Hunter
Councillor A Arkle	Councillor M Huscroft
Councillor Mrs A Austin	Councillor N J Huscroft
Councillor K Barrie	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor L Bell	Councillor D Lilly
Councillor K L Bolger	Councillor G Madden
Councillor P Brooks	Councillor M Madden
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor P Mason
Councillor C A Burdis	Councillor D McGarr
Councillor J Cassidy	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor K A Clark	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor S L Cox	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor EN Darke	Councillor LJ Miller
Councillor L Darke	Councillor Mrs S E Mortimer
Councillor C Davis	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor S Day	Councillor A Newman
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor P Earley	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor N A Percy
Councillor S Graham	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor I Grayson	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor M A Green	Councillor M Reynolds
Councillor M Hall	Councillor L A Spillard
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor J I Walker
	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace

C67/01/16 Presentation of Whitley Bay Town Cup

The Chair announced that the Whitley Bay Town Cup for 2015 had been awarded to Whitley Bay Film Festival, in recognition of the excellent work of the organisers and festival team, which has raised the profile of Whitley Bay as a cultural destination and attracted many visitors to the area.

Director Ema Lea and Assistant Director Simon Fitzpatrick accepted the award on behalf of everyone involved and responded appropriately by thanking the Council for the award and also for its support.

C68/01/16 Minute's Silence

A minute's silence was observed in respect of the deaths of former Councillor Lindsay Perks and also Jaap Kroese, who had been awarded the Freedom of the Borough in 2004.

C69/01/16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Lott, W Lott, J Munby, K Osborne, J Pickard and A Waggott-Fairley.

C70/01/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor JM Allan declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union and life member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor G Bell declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Community Trade Union.

Councillor L Bell declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor K Bolger declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unison Trade Union and the Association of Labour Councillors and also in relation to the Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17 Report (Minute C76/01/16), as she worked in one of the Authority's Customer First Centres.

Councillor P Brooks declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unite Trade Union.

Councillor B Burdis declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor CA Burdis declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a retired member of the Unite Trade Union.

Councillor S Cox declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor EN Darke declared a non registerable personal interest in relation to the Major Modernisation Works on Metro System in North Tyneside in 2016 (Minute C72/01/16) as he was a holder of a Metro Gold Card and a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor L Darke declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a life member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor C Davis declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor S Day declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unite Trade Union.

Councillor D Drummond declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Unison Trade Union, a member of the Association of Labour Councillors and a labour Party Member.

Councillor P Earley declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor R Glindon declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor S Graham declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the GMB Trade Union and the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor IR Grayson declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the National Union of Teachers Trade Union.

Councillor M Hall declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor JLL Harrison declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor Janet Hunter declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Unite Trade Union.

Councillor C Johnson declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union and Unite Trade Union.

Councillor P McIntyre declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the Public and Commercial Services Trade Union and a non-registerable personal interest in relation in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015 report (Minute C79/01/16), as she was employed by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Councillor D McMeekan declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a retired member of the National Union of Mineworkers Trade Union.

Councillor A McMullen declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Communication Workers Trade Union and the Prospect Trade Union.

Councillor G Madden declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of a Trade Union.

Councillor M Madden declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of a Trade Union.

Councillor LJ Miller declared a non-registerable personal interest in relation to the Member Question 3 (Minute C83/01/16) as he was the registered manager of a public health contract.

Councillor A Newman declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor J O'Shea declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a retired member of the Unison Trade Union.

Councillor A Percy declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a retired member of the GMB Trade Union and the Communication Workers Trade Union.

Councillor C B Pickard declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the Communications Workers Trade Union.

Mrs N Redfearn declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a retired member of the National Union of Teachers Trade Union.

Councillor LA Spillard declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a retired member of a Trade Union.

Councillor JJ Stirling declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

Councillor JI Walker declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as she was a member of the USDAW Trade Union.

Councillor M Thirlaway declared a registerable personal interest in relation to the Motion (Minute C75/01/16) as he was a member of the GMB Trade Union and member of the Labour Party.

There were no dispensations in relation to registerable personal interests reported.

C71/01/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 November 2015 be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C72/01/16 Major Modernisation Works on Metro System in North Tyneside in 2016

Cabinet considered a report detailing the major modernisation work that would take place on the Metro system in North Tyneside in 2016. This was part of the ongoing 11-year programme of works being delivered by Nexus on behalf of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) to modernise the Tyne and Wear Metro infrastructure.

The northern loop of Metro through North Tyneside was now Nexus' highest priority for renewal as the rail and track bed had been installed some time ago and the asset was now in relatively poor condition.

In 2016, major works would take place on the section of line between Benton and Tynemouth. This was anticipated to include more than 7km of full track renewal and the

installation of more than 2km of track drainage. While this would ultimately result in smoother and more reliable journeys, carrying out these major works were expected to necessitate both some weekend closures and some longer term line closures, with replacement bus services provided.

Huw Lewis and Neil Blagburn from Nexus were welcomed to the meeting and gave a presentation on the proposed works.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions which were responded to appropriately.

Messrs Lewis and Blagburn were thanked for their presentation.

It was moved by Councillor J Harrison and seconded by Councillor B Pickard that:

Council note the information contained in the report and the presentation at the meeting.

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

C74/01/16 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Council considered a report of the Independent Remuneration Panel setting out the Panel's recommendations in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

The Chair welcomed Mr Les Watson, a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel, to the meeting and invited him to present the report of the Panel. The Panel had recommended that no changes should be made to the Members Allowances scheme for 2016/17. Mr Watson indicated that further consideration would be given to Special Responsibility Allowances as part of a future review of the Scheme.

The Chair thanked the Panel for the report.

It was moved by Councillor CB Pickard and seconded by Councillor J O'Shea that:

"Council approves the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2016/17".

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

C75/01/16 Motion

A Motion with notice, signed by Councillors C Davis, K Osborne and LA Spillard, was considered:

It was moved by Councillor LA Spillard and seconded by Councillor P Brooks that:

'Council notes:

In July 2015 the government announced its trade union bill - a wide-ranging set of proposals which, taken as a package, will undermine the basic right to strike and make it harder for workers to organise effectively in trade unions.

The proposals include ending the ban on employers bringing in agency workers to cover for permanent staff during industrial action - which fundamentally undermines the right to strike.

The proposals will also bring in new restrictions on pickets and protests during strikes. Unions will have to give the details of a lead picketer on every picket line to the police and employers - and the government have even floated the idea of making all picketers give their details to the police. They may even be required to submit a campaign plan to the police and employers two weeks in advance - setting out what they intend to do, whether they will use a loudspeaker or carry a banner and even what strikers intend to put on social media, such as Facebook or twitter.

The government have also proposed new thresholds for turnout in strike ballots, plus additional thresholds for those working in "important public services".

The government want to grant ministers the power to unilaterally cut so-called "facilities time" in the public sector. This is paid time-off mutually agreed between employers and unions for union reps to represent their members and negotiate with their employer.

The government also proposes to prohibit public sector employers assisting unions to collect their membership subscriptions through payrolls - even though this is used for a variety of other staff benefits such as cycle-to-work schemes and childcare vouchers, and even though unions often meet the costs of this.

Council further notes:

The human rights organisations Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights have said that the government's proposals "would hamper people's basic rights to protest and shift even more power from the employee to the employer".

The government refuses to allow trade unions to ballot their members electronically, which could help increase engagement.

Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work and safety.

Strikes in the UK are at historically low levels.

Council believes:

No worker ever wants to go on strike - but it is a crucial last resort for workers when their employer refuses to listen to their views, negotiate with them or compromise.

The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be valued and respected in a free and democratic society.

Without the right to strike, workers will be unable to defend their jobs or pay, stand up for decent services and achieve fairness and safety at work.

The government's proposals will undermine constructive employment relations in place. We believe harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement with trade unions and their members.

That, in the spirit of localism, councils should be free to build positive industrial relations that work for their communities without central government interference.

Council calls upon the Cabinet:

To support the TUC's campaign to protect the right to strike.

To write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council's opposition to the government's proposals on trade unions.

To write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government stating the opposition to the interference of central government in local industrial relations as it is against the spirit of localism.

Write to our local MPs in North Tyneside informing them of our position and encouraging them to oppose the trade union bill.

Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation through trade unions in North Tyneside.

In the event that the government's proposals become law, in so far as is lawful for the council as an employer:

- to continue to allow recognised trade unions to use subscriptions through payroll, or otherwise support trade unions' efforts to move members onto direct debit subscriptions, through allowing access to workers and as much notice as possible of any changed arrangements.
- To maintain current arrangements on "facility time" for trade union reps to represent their members.
- To commit not to use agency workers to break strikes'.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 44 votes to 8 votes.

C76/01/16 Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17

The Council received a report which detailed the options for having a Local Council Tax Support Scheme in place for North Tyneside for the financial year 2016-17. The report also set out the results of a consultation exercise that had been undertaken on four possible options for the scheme in 2016-17.

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

"Council:

- (1) note the recommended scheme, as set out as option 2 in paragraph 1.6.1 of the report which is being proposed to Council by the Cabinet following its meeting on 14 December 2015; and

- (2) agree this scheme as the Council Tax Support Scheme for North Tyneside with effect from 1 April 2016.”

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was agreed by 52 votes to 1 vote.

C77/01/16 Future Governance Arrangements for the Authority

Council considered a report requesting a decision as to whether it wished to agree to hold a Referendum on the Authority's future governance arrangements and if so to determine which one of the two alternative models of governance available to the Authority would be included on the ballot paper as an alternative to the current Elected Mayor and Cabinet model. The report also provided feedback on the outcome of the public engagement process that had been undertaken on the available alternative forms of governance.

At its Extraordinary meeting held on 23 November 2015, Cabinet had considered a report on future governance arrangements for the Authority and had agreed to request Council to hold a referendum on whether to retain the current Elected Mayor and Cabinet model of governance in North Tyneside and authorise the carrying out of a public engagement process on the alternative forms of governance available to the Authority if the current Mayor and Cabinet model of governance was not retained.

The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) allowed local authorities to change the form of governance arrangements under which they operated. The report detailed the forms of governance available to it and what a local authority had to do in order to implement any change to its governance arrangements.

Any change from the current governance model required a Referendum. A Referendum was necessary as the Authority's current governance model had been adopted following a referendum. It was the responsibility of Council to determine whether to undertake such a Referendum and also to determine the form of governance to be introduced as the alternative in the event that residents rejected the current model. The alternative model had to be clearly identified on the Referendum ballot paper.

If the Referendum supported a change to the model of governance, this would take effect from the end of the current Elected Mayor's term of office, in May 2017. In the event that the outcome of the referendum was to support retention of the current Elected Mayor and Cabinet model of governance the existing arrangements would continue and the next Mayoral election would take place on 4 May 2017. If following the referendum, the current governance arrangements were retained, a further referendum could not be held for 10 years i.e. not before 2026.

It was moved by Councillor CB Pickard and seconded by Councillor J O'Shea that:

‘Council :

- (1) note the outcome of the public engagement process on the alternative forms of governance available to the Authority if the current Mayor and Cabinet model is not retained; and
- (2) agree to undertake a referendum on whether to retain the current Elected Mayor and Cabinet model of governance in North Tyneside or replace it with an alternative governance model and;

- (a) the referendum be held on 5 May 2016;
- (b) the committee system model (which includes a leader) - be provided to voters in the Referendum as the alternative to the current Elected Mayor and Cabinet model; and
- (c) the Head of Law and Governance be authorised to prepare the proposal documents for the potential changes in its governance arrangements in the light of the alternative form of governance agreed for inclusion on the ballot paper at (b) above.'

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 46 votes to 0 votes.

C78/01/16 Filming of Council Meetings

Council considered a report which requested approval to film future meetings of the full Council and provide a video/audio record of those meetings via the Authority's website for a trial period. It detailed the legislative background to the right of the press and public to record meetings of the Authority, and provided information on the potential benefits and the experiences of other authorities who already filmed their meetings.

It was moved by Councillor CB Pickard and seconded by Councillor CA Burdis that:

'Council agree to the filming of meetings of Full Council, initially for a trial period commencing with the budget Council meeting on 4 February 2016 until and including the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2016, in accordance with the arrangements set out in this report.'

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

C79/01/16 Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015

Council considered a report which provided an update on the actions being taken in relation to the Motion approved by Council on 19 November 2015, on the proposed Tax Credit changes contained within the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, when it had been agreed that officers would report back to Council.

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review the Chancellor had announced a revised set of proposals. The Bill continued through Parliament, and once a final position was clear the Mayor's Welfare Reform Task Group would report to Council and set out the overall effect the Welfare Reform and Work Bill could have on North Tyneside residents.

It was moved by Councillor R Glindon and seconded by Councillor L Spillard that:

'Council note the content of the report, and a further update be submitted to the Council meeting in March 2016.'

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

C80/01/16 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.

C81/01/16 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

The Chair referred to the receipt by the Council of a petition regarding proposed future childcare arrangements in the Borough, which contained more than 2,000 signatures, and consequently, in accordance with the Authority's petitions scheme would be considered at an Extraordinary Council meeting to be held at 6.00pm on 4 February 2016 immediately before the budget Council meeting that was to take place on that date.

He also thanked elected Members and staff for their contributions in raising £850 in the bottle draw before Christmas.

The Chair also informed Members of the following civic events, to which Members were invited to attend:

7 February - civic service at St John's Church, Killingworth

21 February – meal at Amici's, Forest Hall

20 March – Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade event

C82/01/16 Elected Mayor's Announcements

The Elected Mayor referred to a letter she had sent to the Prime Minister regarding reductions in Government funding to local authorities, and to the reply she had received, which had been circulated around the Chamber.

She highlighted that since 2011/12 North Tyneside Council had had to make approximately £76 million in efficiency savings, and further savings would need to be made in the years ahead.

The Elected Mayor thanked colleagues and officers for their hard work in ensuring the Authority continued to provide services which were valued and were making a difference in North Tyneside.

She congratulated everyone involved in education in the Borough following the most recent Ofsted annual report which stated that North Tyneside had the highest number of good and outstanding first and primary schools in the country.

The Department for Education had announced that North Tyneside Council was the best performing local authority area in the region in terms of GCSE results in 2015 and ranked as 30th best in the country.

North Tyneside had also been named amongst the top five fastest growing tech clusters in the UK according to the latest KPMG research. She congratulated the business sector for attracting companies to North Tyneside.

C83/01/16 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Lilly

Could the Elected Mayor inform Council of the progress in securing a tenant for the old Toy Museum in Tynemouth?

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor S Day

Can the Mayor give the Council an update on progress on the former toy museum Grand Parade Tynemouth. I had previously been informed that we were looking for a developer to invest in the site. Has a developer been appointed and what are their plans for this iconic site?

The Chair had agreed that a joint response be provided to questions 1 and 2.

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

The Toy Museum has been closed since the summer of 2011. The proposed refurbishment of the former Toy Museum is a key project that will complement the Council's ongoing coastal regeneration initiatives.

I am pleased to say that officers have now concluded negotiations with a preferred developer who has plans to refurbish the former Toy Museum and turn it into a high quality public events space. This has taken a little longer than originally anticipated because the developer now intends to make a substantial financial investment upgrading not only the Toy Museum but the whole of the Palace Buildings. This will include the existing shop frontages.

Once the work is complete the Palace Buildings will be substantially improved and will house an excellent and unique events space that will be available to residents and visitors for special occasions such as wedding and civil partnership receptions. The developer also hopes to attract seasonal exhibitions to the venue that will be a valuable addition to the tourism offer available at the Coast.

Councillor Lilly asked the following supplementary question:

Do we have any control of the building next to the Toy Museum, the Indian restaurant that looks quite dilapidated and drags the whole building down, and will any development include the whole building; also will the developer run the whole building or will the restaurant be a separate business?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

It is going to be refurbished by the developer, it will be made smaller, and I believe he'll probably rent the building out to someone.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor P Brooks

Following the in-year cuts to North Tyneside Public Health funding and the announcement by the Chancellor of further cuts for 2016/2017, can the Mayor advise the Council how much this cut will amount to?

Councillor L Spillard replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Public Health England wrote to all authorities on 27 November 2015 to confirm that there would be reductions to Public Health grant of 2.2% in 2016/17 in addition to the savings of 6.2% that were announced and implemented earlier in 2015/16.

Combining both the 2015-16 and 2016-17 reductions gives an indicative £1,067,000 reduction in the budget for the coming year and this is disappointing in view of the fact that we have only received public health funding into the Borough recently and was on the basis that we needed to look at prevention work and be cost effective but actually cutting at this stage is going to undermine a lot of the prevention work that we were hoping to do.

There is a possible further cut to come because ACRA, who are responsible for looking at the formula for public health allocation, have been doing some work that will potentially lead to another £500,000 cut to our public health budget. This means we'll have to look very closely at all of our contracts and consider which services we are able to continue with over the longer term.

Councillor Brooks asked the following supplementary question:

What will this mean in terms of service delivery?

Councillor Spillard replied as follows:

At present we are providing a range of public health services and some of those are required to be provided under the Health and Social Care Act. They include NHS Health Checks, Open Access Sexual Health Services, National Child Measurement Programme and Children Public Health Services 0-5.

We have also had responsibility for health visitors coming into the Authority and we are looking at our 0-19 service with the health visitors. We will continue to focus on those services, but it means we'll have to look at our discretionary services and how we can continue to provide them, particularly on those issues which contribute most to premature death, illness and health inequalities. Our smoking cessation services, alcohol and drug services are things we would not want to reduce so we must try to work smartly to ensure we make the best use of every pound we spend.

We are talking to our partners who are providing services, but many of these are in contracts and we can't enforce cuts on those contracts, particularly the voluntary organisations with their financial circumstances. We can only do this in negotiation if they are able to help us and we will continue to provide a range of services to the best of our ability, but this is going to have an ongoing impact if we have year on year further cuts.

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor D Drummond

There has been speculation in the press, and by opposition councillors, that all the Council would have to do is to lower the growth figures for North Tyneside and that would reduce the need to include the Murton gap site for increased housing provision. Can the Mayor advise the Council that if the growth figures were reduced would our professional advice indicate if this would be acceptable under the present Government guidelines?

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

If the growth figures were reduced, would they be acceptable under the present Government guidelines? The reality is no, the professional advice tells us, as we were reminded at our last meeting, any reduction would fall well below the Government projection and would not meet the aspirations of the Borough.

With regard to the part of the question about reducing the need to include Murton Gap, the answer is no other than a small portion of that land we own as a Council, the majority of it is owned by private developers and the land itself is not protected open space and therefore it would be subject to developers making their case to the Planning Inspector for development on that site so you couldn't give assurances on those two cases.

When we met on 20 October 2015 the three options for growth were clearly explained and we were told that Option A was too high and would require using land in the Green Belt, harming the environment of the borough and couldn't be delivered by developers.

Option C was also considered but it was too low to be acceptable to the Government and would have demonstrated that North Tyneside had no ambition and effectively North Tyneside would stagnate.

The Council quite rightly accepted that Option B, which provides for 828 homes per year, was the right figure to balance the housing and economic needs of the borough; protect the Borough's green belt; and ensures the quality environment and attractiveness of North Tyneside that makes us a successful and thriving Borough is maintained.

It's also important to remember that within any local plan, it's not just about building homes, its also about managing flooding, transport systems, schools.

I think the option we agreed was the correct option and I don't think we can give those guarantees as I said at the beginning of the response to this question.

Councillor Drummond asked the following supplementary question:

It has also been mentioned in local press reports there has been some scaremongering of more flood risk concerning the Murton Gap site caused by any development of this site. Could the Mayor please comment on this situation and any comment made by Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency? Could the Mayor please circulate this response and findings to all Councillors to prevent any misrepresentation of the facts? Councillor Harrison replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

As has also been noted recently in the press, as part of the local plan, developments will not be permitted that are found to increase the flood risk for existing properties or present a risk for the new properties. This would include Murton Gap where new development

would include new ponds to manage surface water run-off and provide an opportunity to install additional drainage that will direct surface water to the North Sea.

We have taken expert opinion from the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water and they have said our plans are appropriate for managing water not only within that area but throughout the whole of North Tyneside, and a lot of work has been done in managing water in North Tyneside.

I will be happy to circulate copies of those letters to the Authority from both those agencies to ensure that everyone is clear that we are getting that expert and professional advice.

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M Hall

Does the Mayor agree that the recent announcement of Kymel Trading Limited to manage and run the Dome and the proposal for a new Hotel on the sea front site will be a major step forward for the regeneration of Whitley Bay?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

There are some people who are happy to talk Whitley Bay down, but I'm not one of them. Since we have come into administration in North Tyneside, it has been very hard to change things in Whitley Bay.

For all the negative things we hear, there are lots of positive remarks coming from people in that area.

The recent announcement of Kymel Trading Limited to manage and run the Dome and the proposal for a new hotel on the sea front is a significant positive step in moving forward the regeneration of Whitley Bay. Both Kymel and the hotel are suggesting significant employment levels, which is excellent news for our residents.

There are of course further benefits including training opportunities, positive benefits for local supply chain providers and additional spend to the local economy. The restoration of the Dome will see this much loved iconic building brought back into use after many years of standing vacant and the development of the hotel on the derelict adjacent site is a major positive step forward.

The hotel will see significant levels of private investment in Whitley Bay which the town has not seen for a number of years and it should be viewed as a major boost that the Authority's investment in the town and sea front is moving in the right direction, and that such a well known and respected brand as Premier Inn has chosen Whitley Bay to invest in.

Coupled with the proposals included in the Whitley Bay seafront masterplan, there is going to be significant investment at the coast to improve the area for residents, businesses and visitors.

Why did the opposition not do anything about the things they are unhappy with when they were in power?

Councillor Hall asked the following supplementary question:

Does the Mayor agree that the tackling of the derelict buildings along the coast means that we're not only focussing on the Dome site, but also considering the rest of the sea front and looking after the town centre as a thriving place with connection from the Dome into the town centre?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

I agree entirely, we're trying to achieve a wonderful coastline from the Quayside through to Tynemouth, Cullercoats, Whitley Bay to St Mary's Island, so by the time the work is finished we'll have a coastline that will attract many visitors and residents will be proud to live there.