

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

17 March 2016

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 17 March 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 A Arkle	Councillor F Lott
Councillor K Barrie	Councillor W Lott
Councillor L Bell	Councillor G Madden
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor M Madden
Councillor C A Burdis	Councillor P Mason
Councillor J Cassidy	Councillor D McGarr
Councillor K A Clark	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor S L Cox	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor EN Darke	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor L Darke	Councillor L Miller
Councillor C Davis	Councillor Mrs S E Mortimer
Councillor S Day	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor A Newman
Councillor P Earley	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor S Graham	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor M A Green	Councillor N A Percy
Councillor M Hall	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor J Pickard
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor John Hunter	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor M Huscroft	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor N J Huscroft	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor J I Walker
Councillor D Lilly	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace

C95/03/16 Public Questions

The Council was advised that a combined response would be provided to Questions 1 - 5

1. Question by Paul Bunyan of Camperdown:

Can the Elected Mayor explain to the residents of Burradon why the Reed Avenue green is proposed for housing development, and has been for some two years, yet is not detailed for development in the local plan. Does she feel this is a fair and transparent way to behave towards residents?

2. Question by Patricia Burn of Camperdown:

Could the Mayor explain why the opinions of the residents of Burradon and Camperdown are not being listened to in regards to the proposed development of the green at Reed Avenue? This site was not marked for development in the local plan published last year and the residents wish to keep it as a safe open play space for children.

3. Question by Gayle Bunyan of Camperdown:

Since 1984 I've lived in Camperdown when the proposed site was initially a waste ground. I think there was an intention to build on it but nothing ever was. Over the years the space has become flatter and greener (with the grass cut by North Tyneside council workers) and is now probably the largest green space we have. It is one of only a few green spaces in Camperdown where children can play safely and parents can keep watch. The response from the Council that there are "other green areas within 300 metres" must have been made by a person who doesn't have children so doesn't know how vitally important it is to be able to watch your children when they are playing outside.

My question is, are the proposed 13 dwellings so vitally important that it's worth putting our children in danger if they have to find another place to play that involves crossing roads to get to?

It seems as if this has descended into a playground brawl with neither side willing to back down. As elected representatives of North Tyneside surely the Council can see the how deep the residents' emotions run over this. The mature approach would be to admit that 13 dwellings aren't really going to make that much difference to the housing shortage and move the 13 dwellings into an area such as Silverbirch, where everybody agrees it is a perfect site to set up a new community?

This development wasn't on the glossy plan we recently received so how can it go ahead?

4. Question by Rachel Bunyan of Camperdown:

Can you please reconsider the housing development for Reed Avenue? The safety of my son and his friends is in jeopardy

I know that it has been highlighted that even with these 13 properties built there is still enough green space for children. I just don't accept that. I would not allow my son at the age of 6 to go any further than the field you are planning to build on. One of the spaces that has been highlighted to me backs onto a 40mph speed limit road and there are no fences. I think you would agree that my son cannot play there safely with his friends!

The space that has been incorporated into the plans is also not suitable as it is in the middle of the houses and shares a parking area, the kids will be moved on very quickly from here due to fear of balls/other objects damaging cars and fences (and that's understandable).

I ask you to listen to the residents of Burradon and Camperdown and put a stop to this development immediately. I want the children of our community to be safe!

5. Question by Chris Wray of Burradon:

Will the Mayor concede that John Harrison's decision to confiscate the children's play area on Reed Avenue, Camperdown (the land was excluded from the local plan and is opposed by 95% of local residents consulted), contradicts North Tyneside Council's official strategy (provide new accessible space-adding to the 25% of the borough that is already open space) and deliberately compromises the safety and welfare of children in Camperdown?

Councillor J Harrison, Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I understand the concerns of your community, but this gives me an opportunity to explain why we are looking at building more homes in North Tyneside, how we made this decision and how we have worked with local people.

I'm sure that all Members in this chamber understand the need for more homes and especially affordable homes in North Tyneside. The concerns that residents express to us as ward councillors are backed up by the data as in the North Tyneside Strategic Housing Market Assessment Plan.

This demand for affordable homes exists in Camperdown, as well as other parts of the Borough. Council will remember that on taking office in 2013 the Elected Mayor asked for plans to be developed to deliver 3,000 new affordable homes by 2024.

It is true that development land in the borough is at a premium, so a comprehensive exercise was undertaken to identify potential development sites to meet this ambitious target. Reed Avenue was selected as a potential development site as part of this process. I think that it is important to note at this stage, the land at Reed Avenue had previously been used for housing.

Although the Reed Avenue site is identified as general open space in the current Unitary Development Plan and not identified for housing in the draft Local Plan, the proposal to develop the site was carefully considered against national and local planning policy relating to potential housing sites and to the protection of open space.

The draft Local Plan is very clear that small sites not identified in the plan for housing can still be considered and will make an important contribution to the Council's overall housing requirements.

So, by late 2014, we were in a position where we had demand for housing and a site that had previously been used for housing and which had just been selected through a comprehensive exercise, and that exercise involved local councillors within those wards looking at various sites and going through them.

At that point, we undertook to start to talk to local people and their elected representatives. After fully briefing ward councillors, we undertook an extensive engagement process with local residents over the plans to build the new homes at Reed Ave. This included sharing the initial proposal with the Camperdown Forum in June 2015.

Letters were hand delivered to local residents in July 2015 informing of the proposed development. Another letter, inviting local residents to a consultation event being held in October, was also delivered.

When the formal planning application was lodged, further letters were sent to residents in the immediate vicinity, as well as site notices being posted to publicise the application and an Open Space Advert was placed in local newspapers prior to it being considered by the Planning Committee.

It is important to note, no objections were received to the Open Space advert and during the initial planning consultation there was only one valid objection received in advance of the Planning Committee, although I will say later on a petition was received with 105 names on it.

The Planning Committee approved the development of Reed Ave at its meeting on 26 January 2016. This is a Planning Committee decision and is not a decision made by the Mayor or Cabinet.

Whether you agree with the decision or not, the fact is that we've been open about the potential regarding Reed Avenue since the summer of 2015. The Council understands the need for open space, but this must be balanced by the need for homes both now and in the future.

To be clear we are not removing or confiscating a children's play area. Some green space will be lost on Reed Avenue, with other areas being identified within 300 metres. This compares well with the expectations of the Council's Green Policy which was identified by the Committee. Also it is really important everyone understands that 500 square metres of open space will still remain on the site after the development for use by the community, including young people.

The Local Planning Authority decision was that the loss of part of this open space was acceptable when balanced against the other planning issues they had to take into consideration.

In summary, this site is important to ensure we meet the housing needs of this area and will directly benefit the whole of the community.

Paul Bunyan asked the following supplementary question:

I think we've established that the community support development in our area, indeed there is a development currently going on not too far away. There will be 40 houses which the community is fully in support of. However, the community are not in support of the development on this particular area.

In terms of the notice in the newspapers, I believe the only one we ever saw was in the Whitley Bay News Guardian, which of course is not available to the residents of Burradon.

We understand the political reasons why there needs to be new houses, but in terms of this particular site we have engaged with the members of the public who live directly there, many of whom have young children. They need that site to remain in order to supervise their young children out playing, and specifically there is a member of the public with a child with autism who lives in Hall Drive. That is the only field which she feels is suitable to be able to supervise her child and feel safe.

Lisa Kirby who's also there has a child with aspergers and no spatial awareness. Lisa can only allow that child to play outside because she can see her from the kitchen window.

If this field goes, despite the small amount of space that's going to be left, which will cause other issues for the residents that are going to move in there, Lisa and the child from Hall Drive will have nowhere to play.

Where does the Elected Mayor expect the child with autism, the child with aspergers and the other young children in the area to play?

Councillor J Harrison replied as follows:

This is not a political decision, it's a decision of reality.

I started off by talking about the Strategic Housing Assessment which says to us there is a need and a demand to build more houses in North Tyneside. We currently have a waiting list which is well over 4,000 and we have to build these homes for the future of our young people and certainly we need to go ahead.

I never said it was going to be comfortable to do this. We're having to look at pieces of land and carry out a balance against that.

Regarding some of the points about where young people play in that area, I think I understand and that's why it was clearly an indication that there will still be some land for young people to play on.

Throughout the area there is a community school with community fields and community play facilities, and there are other sites available to use. But I do acknowledge about a parent and child just outlined by Paul, that's why it's clear that we have that.

But also just to highlight when we initially spoke to the ward councillors in September 2014 they didn't see much of an issue, although they said that we needed to go out and consult, which we have done and they also thought it was a reasonably good site to look at.

When we spoke to the Forum in June there was no initial objections, indeed there was general support for it, but there was a concern about the type of home that would be developed there, and we did amend the plans to flats and houses.

Patricia Burn asked the following supplementary question:

This play space is going to be annoying to the residents who are going to move into there.

I have received a publication this morning from the Council that states the caring listening Council put children first and open spaces. This isn't happening as far as I'm concerned in this situation. You are not putting our children or open space first.

Councillor J Harrison replied as follows:

I disagree with that because if we weren't putting children first we wouldn't be creating an element of green space within that context, we would probably have developed more homes on there.

So we have considered the needs and we've also looked to balance things in the amount of green space available within that area of the Borough, and at the same time the other facilities that are available for children and play. That's always been a concern not only of this Mayor, but of previous Mayors and certainly it's a policy of this Council.

Chris Wray asked the following supplementary question:

Mr Harrison mentions there are other green areas on the estate. What I would suggest to John is to look back at the history of those areas and there are three in particular. There is one in Allanville which is no more than 300 yards away. Not less than 7 years ago there was a resident killed by one of North Tyneside Council's bin wagons. The land next to Camperdown Avenue which is another green area, there was a child killed on that street 30 years ago. And the area of land to the rear of Moor View, which backs onto the main road between Killingworth and Burradon, there was a child seriously injured.

So, I think you are being disingenuous when you are telling us these are safe places for children to play in. Children have the right to play unsupervised to a certain age and a lot of areas John mentions are particularly the Welfare which is the north end of Burradon and it isn't safe for children to travel through the village crossing a number of roads.

Does the Mayor genuinely hand on heart think that our children are safe to play in these areas?

Councillor J Harrison replied as follows:

I disagree with that, I think children will be safe to play in the area and I feel very clear when I've said to you the site that would be developed will be for the smaller children.

The bigger children kicking a football around there's certainly space for them to do that. I think they are big enough and mature enough to go and play on the fields at the pavilion. Those fields, the community school and the development of that area were developed with the community and the Forum at that time.

The other thing regarding children's safety and the speed of traffic moving through our estates and that's one of the reasons why we've introduced a 20 mile per hour. It's not a through road as such, it's only estate traffic that would use that and I would suggest that the respect for that would be the acknowledgement of the community that the reasons for keeping the 20 mile per hour and even less is important because children and younger children do play there, so I can't accept we're putting children at risk.

I think we're doing things in as reasonable and as practical and by putting in 20 mile per hour speed limits, providing safe play areas for young people. There will always be accidents and I can't legislate for that or foresee that.

The Council was advised that a combined response would be provided to Questions 6 - 7

6. Question by Irene Gilbert of Burradon:

Was at the Mayor's Listening Event in Whitley Bay where we asked if you could stop plans for building houses on our only piece of safe green at Reed Avenue, you said there was nothing you could do, the plans had already been passed but have since learned this is not true, you can stop them so please do the right thing and stop them being built.

7. Question by Alan James of Camperdown:

Is the Mayor being completely honest when she says:

"I am puzzled as to who has led you to believe that I can stop this development at Reed Avenue. As I have stated previously planning matters are not within my jurisdiction, planning matters are solely the responsibility of the Planning Committee."

I have recently been assured by two Labour Councillors that Mrs Redfearn has the power to halt or reverse the transfer of land from Council ownership. If this is correct and the Mayor has deliberately misled the public, will she do the honourable thing and resign?

The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn, replied as follows:

As Councillor Harrison has explained in depth, the Council have continued to be open and honest about the proposed sale of the land on Reed Avenue for the building of new homes.

Extensive consultation has taken place around this development with local residents, including a presentation to the Camperdown Forum, numerous letters to local residents and the holding of a public consultation event.

Local residents were also advised of the planning application submission and their opportunity to object to the development at that time.

As I have said previously all planning applications are dealt with by the Planning Committee in accordance with planning legislation. The application for the new homes on Reed Avenue was duly considered and approved by the Planning Committee on 26 January this year.

This decision is not a decision made by Cabinet or the Mayor.

The Cabinet agreed to the disposal of the site, to the North Tyneside Trading Company, for the development of affordable homes in September 2015. Following planning approval, the formal decision to dispose of the site was taken on the 3 February 2016 and completed on 22 February.

The Mayor's Listening Event took place on the evening of Wednesday 24 February, where I was told by one of the residents that they had come to lynch me. That took place two days after the sale.

These homes will be subject to a sensitive local lettings policy that will directly benefit people seeking high quality affordable housing in Camperdown and Burradon.

I'm aware that detailed conversations have taken place between the Cabinet member, officers and ward Councillors, including as recently as 9 March 2016. I have not been contacted by any Councillor objecting to this site.

I do hope this clarifies the decision making process associated with this development.

We have to make decisions on behalf of all the residents of the Borough. Of those residents, 5,000 people need a home to live in and one of our duties as a Council is to house those people. If it was your daughter or your grand daughter or your family, surely you'd want your family to have a home.

We have taken into consideration a play area for your children, and it still will be there, and these houses have gardens too. Many of the children in our Borough are still playing in back lanes.

As far as I'm concerned, I am quite happy with what we have done, and I won't be bullied because I feel I'm doing the right thing for the residents of this Borough.

Irene Gilbert asked the following supplementary question:

I don't think you have answered the question that I asked which was when we came to Whitley Bay. We asked you if you could overturn this ruling. You said no. We have since found out that you could have done.

The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn, replied as follows:

At the time you asked me I wasn't aware of the fact that I could do that and I'm being honest about that. I was not aware of that whatsoever. By that time apparently all this had been tied up. I don't know where you got that information from but at the end of the day I knew nothing about it at that time and I have to tell you the whole process had been concluded by the time I got to Whitley Bay.

8. Question by Liam Bones of North Shields:

Can the Mayor please confirm the cost of the Council Magazine during her time in office?

Councillor B Pickard, Deputy Mayor replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

The cost of the Council Magazine to the Council in 2015-16 has been £29,750. In 2014-15 the cost to the Council was £20,013 and in 2013-14 the cost to the Council was £24,812. In each of those three years it was a lower cost to the Council than in the previous four years.

Liam Bones asked the following supplementary question:

In the Mayor's 2013 ABC, the Mayor promised that the Council magazine would be axed as it was claimed that it was expensive. This clearly hasn't happened. Will the Mayor admit that she's failing to deliver on her promise and explain to the people of North Tyneside why she has broken her promise?

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor B Pickard, replied as follows:

That is not the case. When it came to Council, Council decided we'd have a look at how we do the advertising within the Council. For instance, if you look at the latest magazine that has gone out today, it now includes the Housing Matters as well and that has saved a further £34,500, so we have reviewed the cost of advertising on the magazine to try to increase the income to the Council, we have reviewed the number of times the magazine goes out and we'll continue to inform the people of North Tyneside about events that take place in North Tyneside.

9. Question by Dan Entwisle of Tynemouth:

With Newcastle City Council taking an increasingly tough stance on beggars, can the Mayor tell me what plans are in place to combat not only the existing begging problem – and anti – social behaviour – in and around Tynemouth station but how North Tyneside Council intends to deal with the anticipated displacement of beggars and other criminals from the city to Tynemouth?

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor B Pickard, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

We are aware that Newcastle City Council and Northumbria Police have identified that begging within areas of the city centre has become a problem and this has led to enforcement action being taken including civil injunctions against three persistent offenders last summer.

In North Tyneside operations have also taken place to identify perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour. This has included specific activity in and around Tynemouth Station which has resulted in enforcement outcomes.

The Police we are liaising closely with ourselves and colleagues in Newcastle to continue to share information and intelligence and we will continue to monitor any potential displacement effect.

The Council was advised that the following question had been withdrawn at the request of the questioner:

10. Question by Janis Miller of North Shields:

What is the financial case for the proposed demolition of the Meadow Well Centre?

C96/03/16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, A Austin, K Bolger, P Brooks, R Glindon, I Grayson, Janet Hunter, K Osborne, M Reynolds and L Spillard.

C97/03/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The following declarations of interest were made:

Item 6 – Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 (Minute C100/03/16 refers)

Councillor L Miller – non-registerable personal interest – a family member is employed by North Tyneside Council.

Item 7 – Combined Authority – Proposed Devolution Agreement (Minute C101/03/16 refers)

Councillor P McIntyre – non-registerable personal interest – she is an employee of the Department for Work and Pensions.

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

C98/03/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 21 January (Ordinary), 4 February (2 x Extraordinary), and 18 February 2016 (Extraordinary), be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C99/03/16 Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015

The Council received a report on the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, Housing and Planning Bill 2015. Council had accepted a Motion at its meeting on 19 November 2015 with regard to the proposed Tax Credit changes contained within the Bill and had requested officers to report back to Council highlighting the main implications of the proposed changes.

The Bill had not completed the legislative process when the matter had last come before Council on 21 January 2016 and therefore officers could only provide an interim report to Council at that time.

The Bill had still not yet completed its journey through the legislative process although it was now in the final stages of that process. However, subject to any amendments that may be made to the Bill before it received Royal Assent, Appendix 1 to the report set out the potential impact on the residents of North Tyneside and the Authority, should the proposals contained in the Bill become law.

As some of the proposed changes in the Summer Budget would affect the Authority's social housing stock, it was also considered appropriate that information was included on the changes proposed by the Housing and Planning Bill.

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

“Council (1) note the contents of the report, in particular, the information in Appendix 1; and (2) agree to receive a further update in September 2016.”

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

C100/03/16 Pay Policy Statement 2016/17

The Council received a report seeking approval for the proposed Pay Policy Statement 2016/17, which was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The following areas of the Pay Policy Statement had been amended due to legislative, policy or organisational changes:

- The Median average salary had changed from £21,530 to £21,566 per annum. This was most likely due to a minor change to the bottom of the national pay spine with

spinal column point 5 being deleted from 1 October 2015. The pay multiple had reduced slightly from 6.73 to 6.72, which when rounded meant the same ratio of 1:7 was reported.

- Spinal column point 5 had been deleted from the national pay spine with effect from 1 October 2015.
- The Senior Leadership Team had been reviewed in July 2015 to reflect service area restructures.
- The introduction of the National Living Wage from 1 April 2016, impacting on 555 employees at its implementation
- The introduction of the North Tyneside Living Wage from 1 April 2016.

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

“Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 and authorise publication of the Pay Policy Statement on the Council’s website.”

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

C101/03/16 Combined Authority – Proposed Devolution Agreement

The Council received a report on the proposed Devolution Agreement for the North East Combined Authority (NECA), which set out the proposed transfer of powers for employment and skills, transport, housing, planning, business support and investment from Government to NECA. In addition, an allocation of revenue funding for capital financing of £30 million a year planned to be over a period of 30 years would be given to NECA to help create an investment fund. This and other proposed additional funding that would be included in the Investment Fund had the potential to increase investment by in excess of £1.5 billion over the 30 year period. The proposed Agreement also paved the way for further devolution in the future and for the reform of public services including health and social care and the approach to support for employment and skills.

Included in the proposed Agreement was a proposal that NECA became a Mayoral Combined Authority. This proposal, as with all aspects of the proposed Agreement, was subject to the formal consent of NECA and its Constituent Authorities.

Details of the extensive consultation with the public and business across the NECA area in relation to the proposed Agreement, including the provision of an Elected Mayor, were set out in the report.

Although approval of the proposed Agreement was a Cabinet (Executive) responsibility, the Constituent Authorities of NECA were consulting with their respective Councils to elicit their views on the proposals prior to progressing with the decision making. The view of Council would be considered by Cabinet on 23 March 2016 when a formal decision would be taken on whether to support the proposed agreement and to consent to the introduction of an elected Mayor for the NECA.

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

“Council (1) note the contents of the proposed Devolution Agreement at Appendix 1 to the report, including the proposal that the North East Combined Authority becomes a Mayoral Combined Authority; and

(2) support the proposed Devolution Agreement including the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the North East Combined Authority area to enable Cabinet to have regard to the views of Council in future decision making in relation to the proposed Devolution Agreement including the provision of an Elected Mayor for the North East Combined Authority.”

An amendment was moved by Councillor F Lott and seconded by Councillor T Mulvenna that in recommendation (2):

“Delete from “to enable” to “Authority” replace with “but note that further clarification and commitment is required from Government in relation to the 5 year Gateway reviews on the £30 million revenue grant, Transport Levies, Local Growth Fund/housing funding and Local Major Transport Schemes and APD (Airport Passenger Duty).”

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

The substantive motion to read:

“Council (1) note the contents of the proposed Devolution Agreement at Appendix 1 including the proposal that the North East Combined Authority becomes a Mayoral Combined Authority; and

(2) support the proposed Devolution Agreement including the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the North East Combined Authority area but note that further clarification and commitment is required from Government in relation to the 5 year Gateway reviews on the £30 million revenue grant, Transport Levies, Local Growth Fund/housing funding and Local Major Transport schemes and ADP (Airport Passenger Duty).”

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

C102/03/16 Motions

Motion 1 with notice, signed by Councillors A Newman, C Davis and B Burdis

It was moved by Councillor A Newman and seconded by Councillor C Davis that:

“The Housing and Planning Bill contains a wide range of measures to expand home ownership; reform housing management and the planning process; and increase housing supply to tackle the housing crisis in England. However, the Bill’s main focus is on boosting homeownership at the expense of affordable and social housing, which the majority of people on average incomes need. As a consequence, there will be even fewer social and affordable homes, the housing crisis will worsen and it will become more difficult for people on average incomes to find an affordable home to rent or buy. With fewer housing stock available social housing jobs will be put at risk. The main concerns are as follows:

- The Housing and Planning Bill applies to England
- The measures in the Bill, particularly the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and the forced sale of council housing to fund it, will reduce further the number of social housing stock; they will take away funding from the provision of affordable housing to boost home ownership
- The Pay to Stay measure will make social rents expensive for some and will be

- a disincentive for tenants to get better employment
- Starter Homes for sale are priced too high and will be beyond the reach of many
- Changes to lifetime tenancies will remove security of tenure from council tenants
- People who are not able to buy their own home will have no security in renting and may face a lifetime of insecure renting
- Young people and families on average incomes will be locked out of a decent affordable home
- There will be fewer homes at prices people can afford to buy or rent
- With fewer social housing for renting housing jobs and housing services will be at risk
- More people will face rent arrears, evictions, poverty and homelessness
- There will be more social cleansing of people out of high value property areas

While we welcome some measures in the bill such as help for first time buyers to get onto the property ladder, and help councils with methods to tackle the worst offending landlords, we believe this bill will lead to reducing the availability of much needed council/social housing and hamper our ability to invest in new affordable council/social housing.

We call upon the Mayor to write to the secretary of state raising this council's concerns about the bill and that residents are made aware of the consequences that many residents will have no prospect of a secure or affordable home."

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 42 votes to 6 votes.

Motion 2 with notice, signed by Councillors S Graham, G Madden and F Lott

The mover of the motion proposed an alteration to the motion to add the following words in the final sentence after 'continue': 'to the 31 March 2017 to our struggling businesses'.

The Council agreed.

It was moved by Councillor S Graham and seconded by Councillor G Madden that:

"Council expresses its grave concerns about the government proposal to abolish the retail rate relief. This is estimated to affect in excess of 800 small and medium size businesses across the borough amounting to a loss of £1.054 million relief which represents a significant loss not only those businesses but also the local economy. This major loss becomes even more significant at a time when businesses are struggling for survival. This action is seen as an attack by Government on the viability of a whole range of retail businesses in our town centres of North Shields, Wallsend, Whitley Bay and other parts of the Borough.

We call upon the Mayor to make urgent representations to the Prime Minister to enable this much needed relief to continue to the 31 March 2017 to our struggling businesses."

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 42 votes to 0 votes.

Motion 3 with notice, signed by Councillors J Allan, P Earley and T Mulvenna

It was moved by Councillor P Earley and seconded by Councillor T Mulvenna that:

“This Council believes that it is in the best interests of the residents of North Tyneside that the United Kingdom remains a member of the European Union.

The EU is good for North Tyneside - and other areas of the North East region where North Tyneside residents may work - because it:

- Creates jobs and growth - the EU single market allows our businesses to trade and grow. Currently almost half of the region’s exports go to the EU, which supports an estimated 140,000 jobs. It also supports science and technical innovation in the region.
- Invests in major projects across the North East – the region has received billions of pounds of investment over the decades from the EU. It continues to invest in key economic projects across the North East, including the regeneration of the former Swan Hunter site in Wallsend.
- Protects our rights - the EU helps keep people safe at work and protects consumer rights. The EU protects paid leave, maternity rights and equal rights for agency workers and has banned excessive credit and debit card surcharges and expensive customer phone lines.
- Keeps us safe - the EU helps bring criminals to justice and creates peace and stability. The EU is helping to tackle international threats in a way the UK couldn’t do if it was acting alone which helps keep our ports and airports secure. The EU also helps police tackle crime, human trafficking and terrorism which is increasingly international in nature.
- Improves our environment – the EU leads on tackling climate change and caring for our environment. Environmental issues don’t stop at borders and only by working together closely can we best protect our environment. North East beaches and air quality have improved because of Europe. Environmental protection can also bring jobs to the region through new low carbon industries.

The Council calls on the Mayor and Cabinet to support, as far as lawfully possible, the UK’s continuing membership of the EU as this is in the best interests of the businesses and people of North Tyneside.”

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 40 votes to 4 votes.

C103/03/16 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.

C104/03/16 Chair’s Announcements

The Chair thanked Councillor Mrs SE Mortimer, who would not be seeking re-election in May, for her service to the Council.

Councillor Mrs Mortimer responded appropriately.

The Chair also expressed his good wishes to those Councillors who were seeking re-election.

C105/03/16 Elected Mayor's Announcements

The Elected Mayor thanked the Chair, her elected Member colleagues, the Chief Executive and the officers for the various achievements that had been made over the past year.

She also thanked Councillors Mrs SE Mortimer and J Pickard, who would not be seeking re-election in May, for their services to the Council and wished them well in the future.

The Chair of Council also expressed his best wishes to Councillor J Pickard.

C106/03/16 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor A Percy

Can the Mayor tell me what the Council is doing to help residents stay warm this winter?

Councillor J Stirling, Cabinet Member for Environment, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

Our partnership with Warm Zones continues to deliver very positive outcomes for our residents. Since the new contract started in September 2013, Warm Zones has installed over 800 energy efficiency measures in homes across the Borough, this has included installing new central heating systems in some homes. This has resulted in £360,000 worth of savings each year on our residents' fuel bills. The total capital investment for these works equates to over £1.5m, of this the Council has only needed to contribute £280,000 which I'm sure Council will agree is an excellent return on our investment.

Importantly, Warm Zones also offers free benefit entitlement advice and has secured over £1m of additional benefits for our most vulnerable residents.

I'm sure you will agree we are doing an awful lot to help residents stay warm this winter.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor B Burdis

I understand that there have been some lighting changes to low energy consuming LED lights in council buildings including the Quadrant. What can the Mayor tell us about the savings in terms of cost and carbon to the Council resulting from this?

Councillor J Stirling, Cabinet Member for Environment, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I'm pleased to inform Council that we have installed low energy LED lighting in seven public buildings this year. This project will generate almost £100,000 savings in electricity charges every year;

- Quadrant East will save £47,000 every year
- Parks Leisure will save £11,000 every year
- Lakeside Leisure will save £10,000 every year

- Tynemouth Pool will save £10,000 every year
- The White Swan Centre will save £8,000 every year
- Hadrian Leisure will save £6,000 every year
- Waves will save £6,000 every year

This will equate to a saving of over 500 tonnes of carbon emissions.

3. **Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor M Reynolds**

With temperatures expected to fall over the next few weeks, can the Mayor tell us how prepared we are for this cold spell?

Councillor J Stirling, Cabinet Member for Environment, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I'm pleased to be able to inform Council that we are fully prepared for any adverse weather conditions that may arise.

The short term (6 to 10 day) forecast is that high pressure is expected to dominate through the period bringing largely dry conditions. Whilst it should be milder than it has been recently there will still be the risk of a few sub-zero nights. However, I'm pleased to report that we are well prepared should the temperature drop that low.

Council will know we receive three weather forecasts daily throughout the winter period and plan our response accordingly.

In relation to our road gritting service, we currently have 28 drivers on standby rota and a fleet of 12 gritting vehicles, ready to treat the 240 miles of priority road network across the borough. We also have 3,000 tonnes of salt in stock, which is more than enough to see us through the rest of this winter.

I hope this provides some reassurance that we are prepared as we can be for any cold spell.

4. **Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor J O'Shea**

At a recent meeting of the Mayor's Listening Event held in Whitley Bay a concerned resident asked about the cost of a large wooden fence which was being constructed by the Council on Monkseaton Drive in St Mary's Ward. Can the Mayor give the Council an update on this issue?

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor B Pickard, replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

In its budget proposals for 2015/16 Cabinet agreed to make £200,000 of capital funds available for local infrastructure projects recognising that sometimes small issues have a significant local impact and would not always be picked up by the overall asset management of our highways and open spaces. The scheme has proven popular with Members and residents and 19 schemes were identified by Members and are being delivered in 2015/16. Therefore the funding was continued into 2016/17 and so far, 16 projects have been identified.

The fencing works on Monkseaton Drive were proposed and are being sponsored by the St Mary's Ward Members as part of the 15/16 Community Infrastructure Projects. Officers' understanding from the Ward Members is that there is a long standing issue which has been raised by residents over a number of years who reside in The Chesters and Clifton Grove estates in respect of school children who migrate through the estate and tree copse to and from Whitley Bay High. The fence was intended to control the movement of children to the formal crossing points and also offer a further reduction from the traffic noise on Monkseaton Drive.

The works commenced and were initially suspended following a number of concerns raised by residents in respect of both the line and type of fence being erected. Officers agreed with Members to suspend the works pending further consultation.

Officers then met with Members and agreed not to undertake any further works until Members had had an opportunity to consult further with the residents directly affected, namely in The Chesters and Clifton Grove.

Notwithstanding further consultation officers have proposed an alternative fencing solution which will hopefully address the main issues raised by both the immediate residents and the wider community. The ward members have confirmed their support for this proposal and officers are waiting to confirm the final details with the contractor and will then undertake the works. The new proposal is for a fine mesh fence to run along the tree line Monkseaton Drive of the copse.

The original project budget was £10,000 and notwithstanding initial fencing costs incurred by the contractor, it is expected that the project will still be delivered in line with the original allocated budget.

The Council was advised that the following question had been withdrawn at the request of Councillor Austin:

5. **Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor A Austin**

Could the Mayor explain why a group of residents who had travelled from Burradon to ask a question at the recent Mayor's Listening Event in Whitley Bay were denied the opportunity to speak?"