

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

22 September 2016

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 22 September 2016 at 6.00 pm in The Chamber at Quadrant at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

Present

Councillor D McGarr (In the Chair)
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

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

C34/09/16 Minute's Silence

A minute's silence was observed in respect of the death of former Councillor Duncan McLellan.

C35/09/16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Bell, C Davis, S Day, Janet Hunter, F Lott, W Lott, C B Pickard, M Reynolds and A Waggott-Fairley.

C36/09/16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor K Bolger declared a registerable personal interest in agenda item 6 – Annual Financial Report as she is employed by ENGIE a partner delivering services on behalf of the Authority (Minute C40/09/16).

C37/09/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 July 2016 be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C38/09/16 Safeguarding Adults presentation

In introducing the presentation, the Deputy Chief Executive stated that following discussions with the Chair of Council, the Mayor, Cabinet Members and the Senior Leadership Team, some specific issues had been identified for Full Council to have the opportunity to consider and be briefed on, including the collective safeguarding arrangements for both adults and children.

He acknowledged that Members took safeguarding issues extremely seriously and thanked them for their support and challenge through scrutiny, the Corporate Parenting Panel, Safeguarding Panel, Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer North Tyneside Board, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding and Senior Manager Safeguarding and Quality delivered the presentation on Safeguarding Adults within North Tyneside.

The presentation outlined the statutory context in relation to safeguarding, particularly since the introduction of the Care Act 2014, and the duties placed on local authorities arising from the legislation. Reference was made to the requirement to undertake Section 42 enquiries whenever it was believed that an adult was experiencing abuse or neglect; the duty to make safeguarding personal to the individual concerned; and the requirement for local authorities to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board.

The presentation outlined how those duties were discharged, i.e. dealing with referrals through the Front Door, assessment of risk by a senior social worker and the use of a threshold tool to determine the severity of any referrals.

Statistics were provided to inform Members of the numbers of enquiries and concerns received on an annual basis over the last three years, the main types being neglect/omission of care, physical abuse and financial abuse.

Members were informed of the various processes in place for quality assuring the risk assessments and decisions taken and of the governance arrangements that were in place in relation to safeguarding.

The challenge for local authorities was the increase in demand in areas of safeguarding in a climate of reducing resources and pressures on recruitment, retention and training. In order to meet those challenges, service redesign was taking place within the Authority, with safeguarding remaining as a key priority, and there were plans to merge the North Tyneside and Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Boards.

The presentation outlined the approach to safeguarding in the light of the Target Operating Model and set out the Safeguarding Adult Board priorities for 2016/17.

The Chair of Council invited Members to ask questions and to make comments.

He finally thanked the officers for their presentation.

C39/09/16 Motions

Motion with notice, signed by Councillors A Newman, A McMullen and C Burdis

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

“North Tyneside Council has faced unprecedented cuts over the last 6 years. The Government has indicated that the reduction in grants will continue until 2019/20.

That means more cuts to vital public services when people need them more than ever.

The Brexit vote and the appointment of a new Prime Minister and Chancellor gives the Government the opportunity to address the serious shortfall in local government funding.

The Council calls upon the Mayor to write to the new Chancellor asking him to cancel the further planned cuts to Council grants”.

Two Members present requested a recorded vote in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13 (5).

Votes for the Motion

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, Councillors J Allan, A Arkle, L Bell, K Bolger, P Brooks, B Burdis, C A Burdis, J Cassidy, K A Clark, D Cox, S L Cox, N Craven, EN Darke, L Darke, D Drummond, P Earley, R Glindon, S Graham, I Grayson, M A Green, M Hall, J L L Harrison, John Hunter, M Huscroft, N J Huscroft, C Johnson, K Lee, G Madden, M Madden, D McGarr, D McMeekan, A McMullen, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, K Osborne, J O’Shea, N A Percy, M Rankin, L Spillard, J Stirling, M Thirlaway, J I Walker and F Weetman

Votes against the Motion

None

Abstentions

Councillors A Austin, K Barrie, E F J Hodson, P Mason, P McIntyre, L Miller and J Wallace

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 45 votes to 0 votes, with 7 abstentions.

C40/09/16 2015/16 Annual Financial Report

The Council was requested to approve the 2015/16 Audited Annual Financial Report; the Audit Completion Report and the draft Letter of Management Representation.

The audit of the 2015/16 accounts had recently been concluded. The Audit Completion Report, produced by Mazars, the Authority's External Auditors, in respect of the 2015/16 Annual Financial Report had been presented to the Audit Committee on 21 September 2016. No material errors had been identified in the financial statements. A small number of non trivial errors had been identified as part of the audit but had been deemed as not material. They had no impact on the Authority's underlying financial position and as such had not been amended. A number of disclosure errors identified during the audit had been corrected and were reflected in the Annual Financial Report. A number of Internal Control issues had been raised and discussed with Mazars. Actions had been agreed to respond to the issues raised. A copy of the Audit Completion Report was attached as Appendix B.

The audited 2015/16 Annual Financial Report was attached for consideration and approval as Appendix A to the report. The Statement followed a statutory format as set out in the CIPFA Code and CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice.

Notification was circulated to all Members at the meeting, to inform that matters that had been marked outstanding in the Audit Completion Report had now been concluded with no changes made to its summary of misstatements.

Councillor R Glindon, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources welcomed Mr G Davies and Ms D Harold from Mazars. Mr Davies presented the Audit Completion Report.

Mr Davies confirmed that he was now able to give an unqualified opinion on the accounts and on the Authority's value for money arrangements. He acknowledged the Authority's performance in keeping within budget for 2015 -16 in demanding circumstances and paid tribute to the arrangements the Council had put in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Davies, which were responded to appropriately.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources undertook to provide a written response to a query raised by a Member in relation to Section 5.1 of the 2015/16 Annual Financial Report, specifically the reference to the current control adopted by the Authority in relation to the 'Education Excellence Everywhere' white paper.

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

“Council:

- (a) approve the Audit Completion Report, submitted by the Authority’s external auditors Mazars, and agree the draft Letter of Management Representation; and
- (b) approve the 2015/16 Audited Annual Financial Report.”

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

Mr Davies and Ms Harold were thanked for their attendance.

C41/09/16 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.

C42/09/16 Chair’s Announcements

There were no Chair’s Announcements.

C43/09/16 Mayor’s Announcements

The Elected Mayor praised the work that had been undertaken by the Authority’s Events Team that enabled a successful summer programme of events to take place.

C44/09/16 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor K Barrie

Could the Mayor tell me how much money has been paid in compensation over the last financial year for claims by the public for trips and falls as a result of badly maintained paths and pavements?

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

The answer is £18,585.

Councillor Barrie asked the following supplementary question:

Could the Mayor tell the Council of the Council’s plans for pathway repairs and maintenance and what the allocated budget is for path repairs?

Councillor Harrison responded as follows:

It’s an area that the Mayor is very keen for us to look into. As you will be aware, we carry out repairs to our roads and our infrastructure through our Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and within that Plan we have identified those roads and pathways which we consider as a high priority to be repaired.

Since the Mayor was elected, we have put more money into that, so from 2013-14 a sum in the region of £4 million extra was allocated, in 2014-15 over £3 million and in 2016-17 £3.5 million. That money is split between ourselves putting in revenue and capital monies and also the Local Transport Plan. The money in the Local Transport Plan has been reduced owing to Government.

We will be reviewing the HAMP and we will be identifying more and more work to be done on our pavements. We have somewhere in the region of 1700 kilometres in length of adopted pathways that we need to look at.

Regarding the monies that we have paid out for compensation, we are comparable to other areas, so we are doing reasonably well in North Tyneside. That doesn't mean we are complacent. We certainly have to work on our roads and do more work on our paths as directed by our Mayor.

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor K Barrie

Could the Mayor tell me what her policy is for preventing accidents due to speeding traffic on residential streets?

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

Can I thank the Councillor for giving me the opportunity to say what we are doing about road safety in North Tyneside.

The traffic safety of our streets is a little bit more than catching speeding motorists. It is about how safe we can make our roads for our people, and over the past ten years we have done this through the North Tyneside Road Safety Strategy, which we have recently updated.

The Strategy sets out the Authority's commitment to improving safety for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, motorists and public transport users and minimising casualties arising from road traffic accidents.

Over the last decade the Authority has continued to promote road safety through the delivery of a programme of safety education in our schools, our nurseries and within our Borough. Also we have made safety improvements on our road network such as providing improved crossing facilities. Measures to encourage road safety continue to be implemented and in particular the Authority has completed the process of introducing 20 mph zones in residential areas, around schools and throughout the Borough.

The 2015 -18 Road Safety Strategy is based on five objectives:

1. To help people to keep themselves safe and promote road safety – this will be done through road safety education.
2. To engage with local residents, communities and partners to help develop and implement road safety solutions that meet the needs of all road users.
3. To reduce road traffic casualties in line with the challenging targets in the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan.

4. To provide an annual information report to Cabinet on road safety which will consider performance, road safety, engineering and education issues for the financial year and reviews of the works carried out. This will ensure funding is targeted in areas where road safety is a real concern and to support initiatives which improve healthy and active travel.

These objectives are supported by the following actions:

- We will continue to monitor and assess the success of 20mph zones in residential areas and amend their design if required.
- We will continue to improve safety for children and other vulnerable users by identifying potential issues in the annual information report and addressing these through engineering measures, education and publicity as appropriate.
- We will continue to deliver road safety education and training to schools and key focus groups working with our delivery partners.
- We will take into account the safety needs of all road users.
- We will continue to work in partnership with other organisations such as the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative, the Police, the Highways Agency, neighbouring authorities, Sustrans and Living Streets to improve the Borough's network and maintain consistency with other authorities.
- Through the Network Management Plan and the HAMP we will ensure the road network is managed so that motorised traffic remain on the most appropriate routes and that the network is maintained to an acceptable standard.

Over the last ten years, for the relative size and population of the Borough the number of road casualties in North Tyneside is lower than the English average. Out of 151 local authorities in England, North Tyneside is 54th on this measure, with 1st being the lowest number of casualties relative to population.

Out of the seven local authorities in the Combined Authority area, the number of road casualties relative to population in North Tyneside is the 3rd lowest after South Tyneside and Sunderland.

The long term average number of casualties and road traffic accidents has shown a decreasing trend over the ten years since the adoption of the Council's first Road Safety Strategy.

Councillor Barrie asked the following supplementary question:

Would the Mayor agree that where problems of speeding are identified in these side streets that measures are taken to reduce the speed of these vehicles before accidents happen?

Councillor Harrison responded as follows:

I totally agree with that and just as a demonstration one of the things identified in our plan is speed management, so we will continue to review the speed limits on all roads and our highway network in the interests of road safety with specific focus on those roads or routes with the most pressing problems of collisions, injuries or where there is a widespread disregard of current speed limits.

Speed management offers greater social, environmental and economic benefits so we'll certainly talk about reducing those. A 1 mph reduction in average speeds can bring about a 5% reduction in the number of accidents.

We will also continue with our variable messaging signs which advise motorists of their speed.

We will introduce infrastructure measures, so at high risk or accident hot spots we will identify by analysis or police accident data and speed surveys and we will introduce engineering measures to overcome the main conflicts with those designs.

We will be looking at local safety schemes within the areas themselves, route based strategies and road safety education, continuing the bikeability scheme for our young people and parking at schools, which we all know is a big issue for us and ensuring we will continue with our school crossing patrols.

So the commitment from the Council and the Mayor is to try to maintain and ensure that we better provide for the safety of people using our roads, streets and pavements.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor T Mulvenna

Having spent a lovely Bank Holiday weekend in Whitley Bay I was impressed by the scale of work being carried out to improve the area. Can the Mayor update the Council on the progress being made on the Whitley Bay Regeneration?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

I am pleased to be able to report that a great deal of work has progressed at Whitley Bay seafront including the first phase of the masterplan works, the construction of the new Premier Inn hotel and restaurant and restoration works at Spanish City. If you go to the coast and walk around the area, the hoardings have a little window through which you can look and see the work going on.

Works are now beginning to move along Northern Promenade and will include new surfacing to the bottom of Watts Slope which will again be the site of the kiosk. Work will continue towards the Rendezvous café area and will incorporate new surfacing and street furniture and lighting to the promenade. Currently there is work being carried out on site to allow this to progress, the area has been fenced off for public safety. This will allow the removal of the existing surface at the bottom of Watts Slope in preparation for the new surface to be installed.

I had the pleasure of going to the Spanish City yesterday to meet Ivor Crowther who is Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund North East. There has been some concern that people have said there wasn't much work going on at The Dome. I can assure you that work has been going on for some time. First of all they had to make the building safe before they could do anything. Then they have been doing ground testing over the last few months and yesterday was the first day they could begin work on the restoration.

Recently scaffolding has been erected on site in preparation for the timber frame for the hotel arriving on site. This remains on schedule and is due to be completed in spring 2017.

Extensive preparation works have been taking place in the Dome and as I have said from yesterday official permission has been granted to begin the restoration. One of the early pieces of work will also see the first floor in the Rotunda removed, this will open up this area to show what the building was like in 1910 with its double height space. The external works to the building will be completed by the autumn of 2017, and then following a 6 month fit out of the internal area it is proposed that the building will open in Spring 2018.

I am sure that after all this time all Members will agree that it is pleasing to finally see works progressing in the area after years of neglect.

Councillor Mulvenna asked the following supplementary question:

Is the Mayor in a position to explain the issues around the delay in carrying out the work on the Lower Promenade and could she please give an update?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

There has been a lot of confusion and negative responses coming to us from residents about the delay on the Central Promenade and because of commercial sensitivity we could not make a public announcement.

But, I am now pleased to say these sensitivities have been addressed. We have finalised a value for money exercise and are able to go ahead. It is important to understand that the Central Promenade was planned in two phases. The first phase has been finished and that is when we came in and asked for a value for money exercise because the contractor was asking for more money to carry out the work and we were a little concerned.

We have now agreed terms to move forward and as yet nothing has been decided about the second phase. We are trying very hard and looking at our past consultation with the residents in that area as to what they would like to see there, and I am sure when we come to a final plan it will be agreed with the Whitley Bay Councillors and after that we will go out to public consultation.

I have asked our Chief Executive to put an explanation on the Council website to address the whole issue so people who were confused and frustrated about this delay will understand the circumstances in which we are working.

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor T Mulvenna

Can the Mayor comment on the recent excellent school examination results and how this has been achieved by the schools, pupils and Local Authority working in partnership?

Councillor I Grayson responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I am delighted to be able to inform Members that North Tyneside schools have produced their best ever results in 2016 with all key measures expected to be at least in line with and the vast majority above national average. This is a real testament to the quality of education delivered in our schools.

Our pupils, their teachers and support staff have worked extremely hard to achieve these excellent outcomes and have been well supported by officers from the Council and through the effective work of our Teaching Schools, National Leaders of Education and Governance and the North Tyneside Learning Trust.

Support for schools is co-ordinated through the school improvement service. Our effective School Development Partner programme identifies any vulnerabilities in schools and the School Improvement Service co-ordinates support to ensure early intervention. This is effectively tracked to ensure its impact.

Councillor Mulvenna asked the following supplementary question:

Recently I was particularly interested to hear about the success of Norham High School. Would the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning explain how this was achieved?

Councillor Grayson responded as follows:

This fantastic achievement was all done through North Tyneside school to school support, through the support of the School Development Partner Programme, School Improvement Service and the outstanding leadership at Churchill Community College.

This confirms national statistics that schools in categories are more likely to improve if they remain in local authority control rather than being converted to academies.

The Department for Education's only contribution was to place an academy order on the school the day it came out of special measures.

In light of the strong improvement of a 19% increase in the number of 5 A* - Cs at Norham by remaining in local authority control, will the Conservative Group opposite make representations to their Government and the Regional Schools Commissioner to insist that Seaton Burn remains in North Tyneside local authority control – an Authority which is recognised by Government as a high performer and is in the top ten of local authorities in the country, and this would build on the recent improvement in performance of Seaton Burn. Seaton Burn is making good progress. It improved its 2016 results, with significant progress in English and Maths and all key measures moved significantly from below national average to broadly in line with national average. A recent monitoring inspection in May 2016 deemed that leaders were taking effective action towards the removal of special measures. HMI commented on the swift action being taken by the school and local authority to address areas for improvement.

So, I would ask that local Tories make representations to ensure that Seaton Burn remains in local authority control. This is as Norham High School has done and through the support of the Council, the School Improvement service, all of the staff

there and their excellent leadership Norham High School has made significant progress and this Council clearly believes that we will be able to achieve the same significant progress if Seaton Burn is allowed to remain with the local authority.

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor E Hodson

Further to recent disagreements between leaders of the North East Combined Authority, as to whether to proceed with increased independence from Central Government, or not, can the Elected Mayor clarify the future governance arrangements for North Tyneside?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

Firstly, there is no change to the governance arrangements for North Tyneside, although at this point there is no agreement with Government for new powers to be devolved to the North East Combined Authority as previously planned. The existing powers and responsibilities given to the NECA when it was created in April 2014 relating to transport, economic regeneration and skills remain.

North Tyneside will continue as a Constituent Authority within the NECA and play a full part in enabling the NECA to fulfil those responsibilities.

Councillor Hodson asked the following supplementary question:

I note that the three local authorities north of the Tyne want to work with the Government to gain greater autonomy while the four southern authorities don't. Does the Mayor think that the three northern authorities should seek independence without hindrance of their weaker southern partners?

The Elected Mayor responded as follows:

At this point in time that is pure speculation. There have been no discussions between the three local authorities regarding this matter.

6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor J Wallace

How can the Elected Mayor justify the draconian increase in the cost of the foreshore parking permits from £50 to £250, when surely, if any increase were needed, it should have been very much lower and introduced more gradually, in order to be both fairer and more affordable for residents?

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

I don't agree with the word 'draconian' but I do agree the price has increased.

The charge hasn't been reviewed for a number of years. The reality is that what we were charging was disproportionate to the other parking permits that we have in North Tyneside. By doing this it increases the permit price consistently throughout the Borough and helps towards the financial challenges that we face as a Council.

The cost of the foreshore permits of £50 had remained for several years. Since 2011 when it was increased by somewhere in the region of 67% and it stayed like that even though the costing of the charging for the parking increased itself therefore making it disproportionate to the extent that we were subsidising it.

So increasing the charging ensured that we were consistent throughout North Tyneside and also worked towards making sure that we ended up in a stand alone situation. It's not just about increasing, it's about how you make them more attractive and more beneficial to those people who use them. The old permits were rigid to the extent that they were for a specific car park and were specific to a vehicle. What we have introduced through consultation with some of those users is that the foreshore permit can be assigned to a family, also clubs and groups so it can be shared. We can introduce those permits for 6 to 12 months. Also the permit allows people to move along the coastline as required.

Examples were provided of savings that could be made by boat club members and regular dog walkers using the permits.

Yes, it does appear a significant amount, but the reality is that we were heavily subsidising those permits. This is a way to bring them in line with other permits, making sure they are fair and making sure they can be used throughout the North Tyneside foreshore parking areas. Introducing them either straight off or over time, it was a matter of choice. We could have reduced it for a year and ran it that way or we could have introduced as we have done straight to the £250. We took the choice of doing that and at the time we were managing about 289 foreshore permits and the feedback is similar numbers of people are coming back to buy them, so it hasn't been off-putting, gives us flexibility and helps secure finances for managing our car parks.

Councillor Wallace asked the following supplementary question:

Can the Elected Mayor tell me how much money was raised from the sale of foreshore permits in each of the last two years and how many permits were sold in those years, and how many have been sold this year so far?

Councillor Harrison responded as follows:

A written response will be provided to all Members of the Council.

7. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor L Miller

At which time will the Elected Mayor and Cabinet refresh the Parking Strategy 2012-2016?

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

Thank you for your question Councillor Miller and for giving me the opportunity to update Members on our work in relation to this important Strategy.

Councillor Miller may recall that in July 2016 when we considered a petition relating to parking in the Tynemouth area, I informed Members that I was undertaking a review of our approach to parking management across the Borough.

I also outlined that the issue of parking management was complex and that our approach has evolved since the Council took on responsibility for parking in 2007.

There are a number of views and issues which need to be carefully considered in refreshing our Strategy.

As an example the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee reported their recommendations to Cabinet on how to simplify the approach to parking permits in July. I responded to these at Cabinet in September, accepting the recommendations in principle subject to further work being carried out.

I would like to reassure you the review is continuing and will be concluded when I am confident that I have properly considered all of the issues. Our approach has been to look at what Overview and Scrutiny have said to us, looking at residents' permits, looking at foreshore parking and looking at Business Permits in town centres, with a view to coming up with a policy which hopefully will deal with those areas that have been advised to us. Once we have worked through these, and we have started to do this, we will be informing Council of those outcomes.

Councillor Miller asked the following supplementary question:

Although it is not in my ward, I have been asked by a number of residents if the new parking strategy will include a parking disc scheme in Tynemouth?

Councillor Harrison responded as follows:

When we debated the petition I did say I would look at everything. I wasn't necessarily convinced about disc parking but having said that I'll give an assurance that we will look at disc parking and other forms of parking in that area. I gave an assurance at the Council meeting when we were discussing the petition that we would look at all forms.

8. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor A Austin

Can the Elected Mayor tell me if the Council will be making representations to the Government in support of the Green Paper on Education, published on 12th September 2016, entitled "Schools that work for everyone"?

Councillor I Grayson responded on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

As the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People I am currently considering the proposals of the Green Paper on Education and will make representation in due course once the implications for North Tyneside are fully understood.

We will be responding to the Green Paper consultation by the deadline of 12 December 2016, but also just to confirm we also have regular dialogue and consultations with head teachers and chairs of governors, including recently an

education policy Mayor's listening event which was particularly well received by those that attended in June 2016. We will further consult with our schools during this consultation period. Can I also take this opportunity to ask Councillor Austin if the Tory Group wholeheartedly support all elements of the Green Paper?

Councillor Austin asked the following supplementary question:

Some Councils are already looking into implementing future legislation on selective schools because of the fact that new quotas will mean that the poorest in society have the most to gain from this policy and it will allow selection based on ability rather than on house price. Given this, is North Tyneside exploring options to implement potential future legislation so that we can create a true meritocracy and ensure that our education system in North Tyneside works for everyone, not just for those whose parents can afford to live in a particular catchment area?

Councillor I Grayson responded as follows:

I do note she made no comment on whether she wholeheartedly supports the Green Paper and included in the Green Paper is the element on independent schools and the need for them to contribute more to wider education to maintain their charitable status. I'm sure she would support that.

The Green Paper, which is a consultation document and may or may not become a White Paper and may or may not become a Bill, has in it the 50% element – it wants to improve selection in areas where school performance is below 50% and also where there is a shortage of good school places.

I'm sure Councillor Austin is aware that North Tyneside currently is in the high 90s - 93% of our schools are good or outstanding, well above the 50% threshold of those that the Government are targeting in the Green Paper and also the other element that the Green Paper is targeting is where there is a shortage of good school places.

I'm sure Councillor Austin is aware that 92.8% of our primary school pupils got their first choice of school and 96% of our secondary school pupils got their first choice of school.

Linked together with our overall performance of 93% of our schools being good or outstanding, I'm not so sure this will have any immediate impact on North Tyneside. We have surplus places and we are a strong performer. Obviously these may change but certainly not in the foreseeable future because of the results and therefore there wouldn't actually be the opportunity for North Tyneside to apply.