

Local Government Act 1972

Borough of North Tyneside

23 March 2017

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday 23 March 2017 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 A Arkle	Councillor John Hunter
Councillor A Austin	Councillor M Huscroft
Councillor G Bell	Councillor N J Huscroft
Councillor L Bell	Councillor C Johnson
Councillor K Bolger	Councillor F Lott
Councillors B Burdis	Councillor W Lott
Councillor C A Burdis	Councillor G Madden
Councillor J Cassidy	Councillor M Madden
Councillor K A Clark	Councillor Mrs P McIntyre
Councillor D Cox	Councillor D McMeekan
Councillor S L Cox	Councillor A McMullen
Councillor N Craven	Councillor L Miller
Councillor EN Darke	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor L Darke	Councillor A Newman
Councillor C Davis	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor S Day	Councillor K Osborne
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor P Earley	Councillor A Percy
Councillor R Glindon	Councillor C B Pickard
Councillor S Graham	Councillor M Rankin
Councillor I Grayson	Councillor L Spillard
Councillor M A Green	Councillor J Stirling
Councillor M Hall	Councillor M Thirlaway
Councillor J L L Harrison	Councillor A Waggott-Fairley
Councillor E F J Hodson	Councillor Mrs J A Wallace
Councillor Janet Hunter	Councillor F Weetman

C78/03/17 Minute's Silence

A minute's silence was observed to pay respect to the victims of the previous day's attacks in Westminster.

C79/03/17 Public Questions

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Mayes of Whitley Bay

Given the noise in press currently about business rates rises, much of which seems to be from areas seeing a rise, can the Mayor advise

1. what the change is likely to mean for businesses in North Tyneside
2. what if any impact that has on North Tyneside's budget?

Councillor R Glendon replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

The vast majority of business in North Tyneside will see no increase and a small reduction in cost in their NNDR (National non-domestic rate) as a result of the 2017 valuation in business rates.

The overall fall in the value of business rates was reflected in the budget proposals agreed by full Council on 16 February 2017. The fall in the rate has been offset by the increase in top up grant the authority will receive from Central Government during 2017/18.

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

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mrs Eckford of Weetslade

Why, instead of promoting tourism and visitors to our area, which jobs and livelihood are dependant on, have you decided to close the Tourist Information office at Royal Quays?

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Hull of Whitley Bay

Given that North Tyneside's Tourist Information Centre at Royal Quays occupies a rent free unit in a prime site adjacent to an increasingly busy international ferry terminal, has a retail offer that brings revenue back into North Tyneside Council and increases visibility of events and services in North Tyneside, why will this service close in April?

Councillor E Darke responded to questions 2 and 3 on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

We recognise that tourism is an important part of the North Tyneside economy, with 5.5m visitors bringing £279m of spend and supporting 3700 + jobs. It is for this reason that we continue to invest in making North Tyneside a great place to visit, including the delivery of our £36m Coastal Regeneration Master Plan.

However, in the face of an extremely challenging financial situation it makes sense to consider how technology and trends in visitor behaviour can be embraced to reduce pressures on our budget and develop visitor information provision that's fit for the future.

The number of visitors to our tourism website www.visitnorthtyneside.com has increased by 350% in 4 years and our Surfing in Tynemouth app has been downloaded over 3000 times. And we all know how influential Trip Advisor has become.

With changes in the way in which people access information there is less need to visit an actual building. Visitors can now access information online whenever they need it, wherever they are. In fact our visitnorthtyneside webpage attracted nearly 200,000 visitors in 2016. With all of these measures proving successful we are now going to take our tourism information to our visitors rather than relying on visitors looking for a building based in the Royal Quays, especially as some visitors may head straight to their destination rather than visiting the Tourist Information Centre at the Royal Quays.

However, it is important to note that closing the building doesn't mean we are not speaking to people. We will continue to provide a face to face welcome service with our partners for the thousands of international cruise ship passengers arriving at the Port of Tyne this year.

We will also continue to work with our local businesses to promote North Tyneside as a destination of choice.

The Chair announced that a joint response would be provided to questions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Bunyan of Camperdown

We're aware that you are personally incredibly proud of the local plan for house building that your Council have produced. This has in your view, made it necessary for areas like Reed Avenue, Camperdown to be changed from open play space to land for housing.

We now learn that no children from the NE12 5 postcode have been admitted to George Stephenson High School, despite it being the choice of many parents. This has led to huge disappointment in our community.

Can the Mayor personally give us an assurance that lack of places at a parent's chosen school is not connected to the local plan that she so proudly champions? And as a former headteacher herself, can the Mayor specifically outline what commitments she is giving to allow parents to have the education that they choose for their children?

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Marshall of Killingworth

Residents on the Greenhills estate in Killingworth have been devastated to learn that their children are not able to attend their local high school, George Stephenson, for admission in September this year. My son will have to pass our local school on a bus to get to and from the school he has been offered admission to.

I have since learnt that North Tyneside school catchment areas have not been reviewed for 30 years, which is well before the estate that I live on was built. The council local plan has meant that planning permission had been granted for 100's of new homes within our local area, but without a review of the high schools and how they will cope with the influx of children from the new housing estates.

When will high school catchment areas be reviewed in line with the local plan for house building, so that our children will have the option to be able to apply for and attend our local schools, specifically in the Killingworth area?

6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Johnston of Killingworth

I have been a resident of the Greenhills estate, Killingworth, for the last 10 years and during this time, have seen my neighbours' children be offered and accept a place at George Stephenson High School. As the parent of a child shortly to be applying for a secondary school place, I am very concerned to learn that no children from Greenhills have been offered a secondary school place at George Stephenson High School for September 2017, despite it being the first choice of many parents. Can the Mayor please explain why this is the case this year and whether, based on current statistics for the number of current Year 5 children in catchment for George Stephenson High School, parents of children living on Greenhills who are applying for a secondary school place for their child in September 2018 are likely to find themselves in the same situation?

7. Question to the Elected Mayor by Ms Johnson of Killingworth

This year, none of the Year 6 children from the Greenhills estate in Killingworth secured places for George Stephenson High School for September 2017 entry.

This has had a huge impact on the local community knowing our children have to travel away from the community in which they know and in which they should be educated. This also poses as a safety concern in my opinion.

Given the amount of new houses being built and furthermore being planned within the area, the problem is simply being compounded. There will be more children in the catchment area and no immediate plans to build a new high school to accommodate them.

Greenhills has a Killingworth address and postal code and should be classed as catchment for GSHS admission purposes, unlike Holystone and Shiremoor. The catchment area has not been changed in some 30 years and it is my belief that it is no longer fit for purpose and is quite simply out of date.

You state that you are committed to listening to the people's concerns and that they are addressed accordingly, as a Council that cares about what people think.

My question is do you think it is morally right to exclude this estate and these children for having the opportunity to attend their local high school and whether you agree that the catchment should be changed?

Councillor I Grayson responded to questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

I understand that it is a really important time for parents and children when they choose their new school.

Every year Admission Authorities are required to determine their Admission Arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code. We do this annually in consultation with schools.

If there are any changes proposed we have to have a formal consultation and we consult with parents, schools, neighbouring local authorities and all interested parties.

There have been no changes to catchment areas for well over 30 years. This dispels any stories that the catchment areas have been changed. Also there have been no changes to pupil admission numbers (PAN) for many years, we think since 2000/2002, so over the last 15 years the pupil admission numbers have been the same.

George Stephenson High School's PAN has been 228 and has offered places to 228 pupils according to the previously agreed over subscription criteria and this is the first time in a number of years that this has had to be applied.

Previously this did not need to be applied and I am aware that previously some children from Greenhills estate have got into George Stephenson when it wasn't full. For clarification there have been no changes to the pupil admission numbers for many years and also there have been no changes to the over subscription criteria. These are used when the school has admitted the maximum number of pupils, which is what George Stephenson have done this year.

With regards to admission numbers the DfE provided a formula in 2001 as to how to calculate admission numbers for a school and takes into account the size, the age of the pupils, the general areas available for live practical areas like IT, science, PE, engineering, large performance areas, assemblies, music, and there is a calculation and a formula made, and George Stephenson follows the criteria of the formula.

North Tyneside has over 94% schools good or outstanding and is in the top 10 local authorities in the country on performance and also year 7 pupils in North Tyneside achieved 94.29% first choice preferences this year and regularly performed in the mid 90% for first choice preferences. Nationally the percentage is 84%, North Tyneside is in the top 10% performing in this area for offering first choice places for schools combined with having a high percentage of good and outstanding schools to choose from.

However, I do appreciate how disappointing it can be for those families who are not offered their first choice.

On the specific point in question 4 regarding the Local Plan, the Local Plan has not been implemented yet and is in the final stages of consultation and will come into force and be implemented later this year, therefore no houses have been built as a result of the Local Plan.

For information the strategic site at Killingworth Moor, which is in the local plan is located in the Longbenton High School catchment area. The local plan, which will come into effect in 2017 and will last for 15 years to 2032, will propose a 900 place secondary school, which will serve the Killingworth and surrounding areas as well as an additional primary school for the area and an additional primary school for the Murton Gap area.

It is true with regards to question 5, that a small number of children from Greenhills estate have not been given a place at George Stephenson High School when previously children from this area have because George Stephenson was not admitting to its maximum number. There are no current plans to review the catchment areas or the admission numbers. We will keep it under review and if we do consider any changes we will have to go through a formal consultation and in effect any changes would be in a year hence because of the formal consultation process that we have to go through. All criteria have been in place for years and consulted on and acted upon on the advice of the DfE.

If and when a new school is built catchment areas would have to be reviewed. Clearly when the new school in the Killingworth area is introduced there would need to be a review of the catchment area.

With regards to question 6 regarding year 5 admissions for September 2018, I have received analysis of the current year 5 in the George Stephenson High School catchment area and on current information and with the following assumptions pupils from within the George Stephenson High School catchment area do not fill George Stephenson High School to capacity in September 2018.

The assumptions would be that those year 5 pupils currently in middle schools, faith schools and special schools would continue because there is no transfer from middle schools in year 5 and those who have chosen faith schools presumably will continue to choose faith schools and those who need special education schools would presumably still receive special education, so on the assumption that middle schools, faith schools and special schools pupils in year 5 remain in those categories of school the current numbers would not fill up to the capacity of George Stephenson High School for next year's year 5. There are no guarantees, and the information is only as good as the information the day you get it because with parental preference, parents can make any choice they wish.

With regards to question 7 it is true to say that Greenhills Estate is not in the catchment area for George Stephenson High School and never has been, the boundary being the A1056. The Killingworth Moor site in the Local Plan is in the Longbenton catchment area and there are no current plans to review catchment areas, although this would be kept under review.

Myself and the Mayor are very concerned about the quality of education in North Tyneside and hence we support a school improvement service and will to continue to collaborate with all schools, hence North Tyneside being one of the top 10 performing authorities in the country.

Mr Bunyan asked the following supplementary question:

North Tyneside should be commended for being in the top 10% in the country and it is wonderful that 94% of children have been admitted to their first preference school.

We heard a lot of policy, statistics and detail and I thank you for your answer.

What we have seen is that the George Stephenson High School admissions this year have come as a shock to parents. Whilst all the statistics may be correct, parents want their children to go and have the desired education that they want.

One of the options parents have is to send their children to Seaton Burn which is in their catchment area. We don't believe that Seaton Burn High School would be classed as one of the schools in the top 10% of schools in the country. We have been told it's a failing school and is going through a transition to academy status. You're saying to parents potentially you are going to send your children to a school that is deemed as failing, not a school that is successful. What are we saying to those parents who are not able to get the children to go to the school they want and are being sent to a failing school?

Councillor Grayson replied as follows:

Just to clarify it's the local authority that is in the top 10% of the country.

I'm also sorry that it is a shock to you and I can understand because pupils previously from Greenhills have gone into George Stephenson High School. However, we have policies in place and procedures to consult formally and it would take at least a year to change anything. I am well aware of the situation and am sympathetic as is the Mayor as we are talking about children and not statistics. However, because we have to conform to the rules and regulations set down by the DfE, the only current option for parents in this situation is to appeal and I would strongly advise all parents to appeal. It's the independent appeal panel that will listen to the exact case and comment on the case that you put forward on how close you live, what community you're in and how you are attached to the George Stephenson community area. We have to conform to the rules and because the school has admitted within the criteria to the standard number on the previously consulted catchment area and pupil admission number, the only option within the legal process is to appeal. I do wish you well and I am aware that some parents are successful at appeal.

I can assure you we will continue to keep the situation under review, hence in the light of the question I did seek information about year 5 and destination predictions for those pupils as well. I also sought information on house building, etc so I can take to my Cabinet colleagues any concerns that we have, but I do take on board the fact that you're here for your children and I accept it's very important.

Ms Marshall asked the following supplementary question:

It's great to see that schools in North Tyneside are performing so well compared with the rest of the country and that 94% of children did get their first choice of high school this year. There is a lot of house building going on in North Tyneside especially in the NE27 and NE12 area and that will continue for the next couple of years. What I'd like to know is next year you say there will be enough space for children in the area to go to George Stephenson but is there a short term solution so if this happens in the next couple of years again that George Stephenson can support the local children to go to their local school? My son will have to get a bus past George Stephenson to get to the school he has been offered when it's a 10 minutes walk and 0.581 miles away from my house.

Councillor Grayson replied as follows:

I will continue to monitor the situation. The answer that I gave with regards to next year's year 5 was that on a couple of assumptions, those who are currently in middle schools, faith schools and special schools and they continue to go to those schools, George Stephenson High School would not be admitting to its pupil admission number of 228 from in-catchment pupils. Therefore if there are spaces for up to 228 they would then admit on the criteria of those that are nearest from outside the catchment area.

Mr Johnston asked the following supplementary question:

My question is in relation to Year 5 students as it currently stands, I understand the assumptions being made and my request is to get the exact number so I can make my own decision as to whether I'm going to stay in the borough or move to somewhere else. Can I have the exact number as it stands today so I can draw my own logical conclusions?

Councillor Grayson replied as follows:

I would have to wait until after the appeal process has concluded before I can share that information. However once the appeal process is concluded for this September admissions I am willing to share this information. I hope you understand the reason why this is so as the legal appeal process has to be concluded.

8. Question to the Elected Mayor by Mr Hay of West Monkseaton

I ask a question in view of the 5% increase in council tax acknowledging that with the growing aged population there will inevitably be a strain the social care resources. I further acknowledge the need for a joint strategy for social care with the NHS to free up bed space and resources there, giving the ill and infirmed the most appropriate care they deserve. I therefore accept as a local council tax payer my responsibility to contribute to that. Why however on that basis has the Elected Mayor rejected the opportunity to have an additional £50,000 in the next financial year for mental health, as proposed by Conservative councillors.

However I and I am sure the other rate payers deserve a break down of how this increase was decided and disclosure of what alternative budgets were suggested and if rejected on what rationale. The quality of life of residents is a balance of paying the correct amount of local tax and receiving the appropriate amount of service this includes policing and the precept rise of 2% for 2017 to 2018. Good governance of our finances requires good management and a structured review strategy.

Therefore my question simplified to you Mrs Redfearn, is what were the proposed alternative budget suggestions and why were they rejected?

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

The procedure for agreeing the Council's Budget is that Mayor and Cabinet present their proposals to Council, Council receives the report, there is then a budget setting meeting and this year it was on the 16 February. At this meeting Members had the opportunity to put forward objections to the Mayor's budget and if any objections were agreed they would need to be further considered by the Mayor and Cabinet and brought back to a subsequent final budget meeting.

Objections were received from both the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative group. The Conservative group objection was rejected by the Council. The main reason for that was they had intended not to increase the Council tax by 2%. The Council agreed this was financially imprudent as in the Local Government settlement the cuts to Council funding from the Conservative government assumes that councils do raise council tax and therefore additionally reduces each council's grant by the equivalent amount each year.

The consequence of this is that in addition to the already significant cuts of £50m over the next 3 years we would have to find an additional £5m to make up this shortfall. The £5m alone would have been a hidden council tax rise of 6% just to cover the one off nature of the proposals.

The Council received a one off dividend from the Airport of £2.69m, the Conservatives chose to use this one off to reduce council tax and pay for pavements and road improvements. As I have previously explained this would have to be replaced by raising council tax. In addition the Council would have been left with an extra debt payment of £200,000 a year to pay for this and an additional £100,000 from revenue without any indication how they would maintain this in future years. A further short term action was to

use immediately the £175,000 available from settlement adjustments. This was how they were going to find additional money for dementia day care. However, it is interesting to note they proposed to spend more on free parking than on dementia and so they would have reduced our reserves, balances and contingencies by £2.86m for a one off expenditure.

The Mayor has taken the position that the £2.68m would be held in reserves and contingencies, this was because as with other councils we face tremendous financial pressures on services to vulnerable groups. Many of our expensive services are demanded, for example you cannot predict each year how many children would need to be taken into care, how many residents will need extra care packages and how many residents with learning disabilities will need additional care. At the moment our learning disability and mental health service now face a pressure of nearly £4m. So the proposal to use part of the contingencies for dementia care would mean less to support unseen pressures but more cynically the rest of the £175,000 i.e. £125,000 would be taken away from our vulnerable groups to give free parking and additional grass cuts. I think this shows where their priorities are.

Not surprisingly this objection was put to the meeting and defeated by 45 votes to 7.

The Liberal Democrats' was rejected because it consisted of only a critique, asking the Mayor to write to the government to complain about government cuts, this critique did not include any suggested financial changes other than to ask to review certain areas of expenditure without any indication as to alternative financial proposals. This objection was put to the meeting and was defeated by 49 votes to 2.

The Council accepted the Mayor's proposals for the budget. The reason for this was that the budget proposals had once again risen to the challenge of the further attacks on local government from the relentless government cuts agenda. It continued to protect services such as libraries, the environment, leisure facilities, weekly bin collections and no charges for garden waste collections. The budget still invested in our communities, at our coastline, in our town centres and continued to be business friendly to attract new employers and jobs, yet still had sufficient reserves and contingencies to cope with any additional demands for services for our most vulnerable residents.

We are now running the Council on £41m less than when the Conservatives were in control of this Council or by the end of this financial year £62m. With this level of efficiency there is no wonder the Conservatives accepted all the Labour Mayor's efficiency measures of £18m and then praised what we have done in the last four years in achieving service delivery improvements and at the same time noted residents' satisfaction with those services had risen.

The Mayor's budget, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 42 votes for and only 2 votes against. There were 7 abstentions, the 7 abstentions all being Conservative councillors. If you look at the definition of abstain it is formally decline to vote either for or against a proposal or a motion so therefore they did not oppose the Mayor's budget.

However I think it was more like the other definition to restrain oneself from doing or enjoying something. Obviously they did not want to publicise how enjoyable they found the Mayor's budget and how suitable it was for the residents of North Tyneside.

Mr Hay asked the following supplementary question:

Thank you for your detailed response and can I seek clarification of this matter.

Council received a dividend of over £2.6m from its shares in Newcastle Airport. Why was that money not used to pay for services in the next financial year, rather than putting extra burdens on residents by raising Council tax again or is the dividend needed to bail out the Council's finances this year because they have been so badly managed that there is a huge overspend as reported to the Finance sub committee and if this is indeed what the money is filtered away for why wasn't the Mayor open and transparent with residents at the February budget meeting?

Councillor B Pickard replied as follows:

Chair, I can understand how the questioner has no idea of local government finance. However, I did mention that the £2.68m was actually put into reserves and balances because each year you cannot predict how many children will be in care, how many older people with dementia will need additional care packages, how many people with a disability will need care packages, how many people transitioning from children to adults need additional help and support. That is what the money is for. It is the one off cost that you talk of doing that has to be put back into the Council's budget. Any time you use reserves or balances it has to be financed in following years and put back in.

As I said before, this would leave a black hole of 6% in the budget. If you want to find out where the full details are they are all available on the Council's website and there is also a video of the meeting as it progressed.

C80/03/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Allan, K Barrie, P Brooks, K Lee, P Mason, M Reynolds and J I Walker.

C81/03/17 Declarations of Interest

Councillor K Clark declared a non-registerable personal interest in agenda item 6 – Annual Report of the Director of Public Health as she is a Company Director and CEO of Justice Prince CIC (Minute C84/03/17).

Councillor L Miller declared a non-registerable personal interest in agenda item 7 – Response to the Council Motion on reduction of NHS services and implications of the STP in North Tyneside as he is a Director of Tyne Health, a Practice Manager and a co-opted member of the Newcastle and North Tyneside Local Medical Committee (Minute C85/03/17).

C82/03/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 19 January, 2 February and 16 February 2017 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C83/03/17 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Council gave consideration to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18.

Councillor B Pickard welcomed Mr John Anderson, the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who presented the report, and Mr Les Watson, a member of the Panel, to the meeting,

The Panel had recommended that no changes should be made to the Members' Allowances scheme for 2017/18 with the exception that the Dependent Carers' Allowance be paid to eligible Members aged 25 and over at the equivalent to the National Living Wage rather than the Minimum Wage.

The Chair thanked the Panel for the report.

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

Council approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 53 votes to 0 votes, with 1 abstention.

C84/03/17 Presentation of the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Health and Wellbeing, introduced the Director of Public Health who delivered the presentation 'Fit' for our own Futures?

The presentation outlined that the ageing process was not the principal cause of disabling disease and the major influence (75%) on the ageing process was due to external environmental factors, with 25% being genetically determined.

Data was presented that demonstrated the spread of the population of the Borough in age, gender and life expectancy.

The presentation further demonstrated the numerical data and causes of excess deaths within North Tyneside.

It was emphasised that many of the illnesses associated with ageing could be prevented or postponed and exposure to certain risk factors through lifestyle and environment increased the chances of getting a disease or condition.

There were four main risk factors these being physical inactivity, obesity, alcohol consumption and smoking, with the most common combination of risk factors to men and women being low physical activity and low consumption of fruit or vegetables.

The association with physical activity and having good mental and physical health was discussed as well as greater social inclusion.

It was emphasised that it was good to grow old and society benefited from having older people, that many conditions associated with ageing were preventable and it was the lifetime of exposure to risk factors that impacted on health as we aged.

It was considered that having a universal and targeted approach to a healthy lifestyle with a focus to tackle inequalities would prevent the rise in and deterioration of those with long term conditions.

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

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for her presentation.

C85/03/17 Response to the Council Motion on reduction of NHS services and implications of the STP in North Tyneside

At its meeting on 19 January 2017 Council had approved a Motion with regards to the implications of the current plans for the NHS in North Tyneside and in particular understanding the impact of the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham (NTWND) Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for North Tyneside.

Council received a report with the findings of the review that had been undertaken.

In moving the report, Councillor M Hall indicated that she wished to alter the motion to add the following recommendations:

- (3) notes that the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board will meet with her counterparts in neighbouring Authorities to explore the ramifications of the STP across the whole Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham (NTWND) footprint and share with them the Authority's particular concerns for North Tyneside; and
- (4) requests the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to write to the Minister of State for Health, Philip Dunne M.P. outlining the concerns on behalf of the Authority and its residents; and if those concerns should be echoed by some, or all, of the neighbouring Authorities, by agreement with the Chairs of the other Health and Wellbeing Boards in the NTWND footprint, endeavour to write stating the collective concerns of all of the relevant authorities.

The Council agreed.

It was moved by Councillor M Hall and seconded by Councillor A Waggott-Fairley that:

Council:

- (1) notes the content of the report;
- (2) notes that the report was also referred to Cabinet on 13th March 2017 and Cabinet agreed to authorise the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to seek more detail on the plans for the NHS and monitor the progress of the STP in North Tyneside on behalf of Cabinet, and where there is likely to be any significant impact for the Borough or the Authority to report back to Cabinet;

- (3) notes that the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board will meet with her counterparts in neighbouring Authorities to explore the ramifications of the STP across the whole Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham (NTWND) footprint and share with them the Authority's particular concerns for North Tyneside; and
- (4) requests the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to write to the Minister of State for Health, Philip Dunne M.P. outlining the concerns on behalf of the Authority and its residents; and if those concerns should be echoed by some, or all, of the neighbouring Authorities, by agreement with the Chairs of the other Health and Wellbeing Boards in the NTWND footprint, endeavour to write stating the collective concerns of all of the relevant authorities.

An amendment was moved by Councillor B Pickard and seconded by Councillor A Newman as follows:

To add the following recommendations: .

- (i) In the light of the Authority's concern at the extent of the reduction in local NHS services - the original changes, and now the additional reduction in urgent care, has left many residents concerned and confused on how to get the appropriate care - the Mayor be requested to write to the CCG to invite them to:-
 - Further publicise how and where residents may access the appropriate care for their health needs.
 - Restore 24 hour urgent care in the Borough.
 - Reconsider the reduction from three centres to one centre for urgent care in North Tyneside; and
- (ii) In the light of the Authority's concern that the STP is turning out to be a cost cutting exercise to hide the insufficient funding of the NHS the Mayor be requested to write to NHS England about the lack of meaningful engagement with local authorities and that prevention and tackling inequalities did not feature despite being a critical part of the North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The amendment, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 48 votes to 3 votes, with 2 abstentions.

Council considered the substantive motion.

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

Votes for the motion

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, Councillors A Arkle, G Bell, L Bell, K Bolger, B Burdis, C Burdis, J Cassidy, K Clark, D Cox, S Cox, N Craven, E Darke, L Darke, C Davis, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, R Glindon, S Graham, M Green, M Hall, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, M Huscroft, N Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, D McGarr, D McMeekan, A McMullen, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, K Osborne, O'Shea, N Percy, B Pickard, M Rankin, L Spillard, J Stirling, M Thirlaway, A Waggott-Fairley and F Weetman.

Votes against the motion

Councillors A Austin, E Hodson, P McIntyre and J Wallace.

Abstention

Councillor L Miller.

(Note: Councillor I Grayson was not present at the time the vote was taken).

The motion, as amended, on being put to the meeting, was agreed by 48 votes to 4 votes, with 1 abstention.

C86/03/17 Pay Policy Statement 2017/18

A report was received that provided Council information on the Authority's approach to pay and grading relating to the workforce and in particular Chief Officers, and sought approval to the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.

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

Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 and authorise publication of the Pay Policy Statement on the Authority's website.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 52 votes to 0 votes, with 1 abstention.

C87/03/17 Motions

Motion 1 signed by Councillors Peter Earley, Matthew Thirlaway and Wendy Lott.

It was moved by Councillor P Earley and seconded by Councillor M Thirlaway that:

Council notes:

Due to recent changes to legislation, victims of domestic abuse now have to provide a piece of evidence – such as a GP's letter, which can incur a cost of up to £175, to prove the abuse before they can access legal aid.

Council calls upon the Mayor to:

Write to the Prime Minister calling upon her to scrap the unjust fee in seeking such evidence.

Councillor J Wallace proposed an amendment to the Motion; however following advice the Chair determined that the proposed amendment would negate the motion and could not therefore be allowed.

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

Votes for the motion

N Redfearn, Elected Mayor, Councillors A Arkle, G Bell, L Bell, K Bolger, B Burdis, C Burdis, J Cassidy, K Clark, D Cox, S Cox, N Craven, E Darke, L Darke, C Davis, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, R Glindon, S Graham, M Green, M Hall, J Harrison, Janet Hunter, John Hunter, M Huscroft, N Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, G Madden, M Madden, D McGarr, D McMeekan, A McMullen, T Mulvenna, A Newman, P Oliver, K Osborne, O'Shea, N Percy, B Pickard, M Rankin, L Spillard, J Stirling, M Thirlaway, A Waggott-Fairley and F Weetman.

Votes against the motion

Councillors A Austin, E Hodson, P McIntyre and J Wallace

The motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 48 votes to 4 votes.

(Note: Councillor I Grayson was not present at the time the vote was taken).

Motion 2 signed by Councillors Carl Johnson, Andy Newman and Anthony McMullen.

It was moved by Councillor C Johnson and seconded by Councillor A McMullen that:

Council notes:

The sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport plays a crucial role in our efforts to re-balance the economy and to support new business growth.

The disappointing lack of a plan to find a solution for regional airports in the Budget is a matter of concern.

Council Calls upon the Mayor to:

Write to the chancellor setting out our concerns asking him to commit to finding a solution to protect regional airports from a cut to Airport Duty in Scotland.

The Motion, on being put to the meeting, was approved by 51 votes to 0 votes, with 1 abstention.

C88/03/17 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.

C89/03/17 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

C90/03/17 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor took the opportunity to reflect on the last four years.

She referred to the budgetary pressures that she had faced upon her election and the efficiency savings that the Authority had been required to make over the past four years.

However, despite the unprecedented cuts much had been achieved and she thanked the Cabinet, her Group Members, the Chief Executive and all staff for their hard work in delivering her priorities.

Her priorities had been identified by the residents of North Tyneside, who had asked for jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for young people. She stated that 6,796 jobs and 7,680 apprenticeships had been created in the last 4 years, with the Cobalt Business Park being 90% and Quorum 65% occupied.

Residents wanted affordable homes and the Affordable Homes Programme with the aim for 3,000 new homes by 2024 was on track. This had delivered 850 new homes in 3 years and a further 300 in 2017/18 and was in addition to the 900 fully refurbished or new retirement apartments and bungalows in sheltered housing schemes for older residents.

Residents wanted improvements to the coastline and town centres. There was much evidence of regeneration taking place along the coastline. The High Point Hotel, Whiskey Bends, and the former Avenue Public House had disappeared and would be replaced by new residential homes.

Work continued with the restoration of the Spanish City Dome as the centre piece of the major investment as with central lower and northern promenades improvements.

Major improvements could be seen to the Wallsend town centre and the Forum shopping centre, bringing forward development of a new supermarket and other new retail facilities in the town.

Considerable infrastructure had taken place with the Swans site over the last four years and there was now focus on strengthening the quay to ensure it meets with industry standards and to accommodate a crane that would meet the needs of the business sector on site.

The Swans Innovation Centre had 8 of the 10 offices occupied with the creation of 40 jobs.

In North Shields town centre there were ambitious plans for the town centre starting with the redevelopment of the vacant properties in Northumberland Square.

Investment into roads and pavements had totalled £9.2m in the last 4 years, with an additional £6m being placed in the budget over the next 3 years to further improve these.

With regards to schools in North Tyneside, the Mayor informed Council that 90% of primary schools were in the top 10% in the country. The majority of schools were classed as good or outstanding and one of the Borough's high schools was in the top 10 schools in the country.

She thanked the schools and staff who taught and supported the children and young people of North Tyneside for their work.

She also referred to the achievements of gaining national recognition as the borough had been awarded 5 green flags for parks and 3 blue flags and 4 seaside awards for its beaches.

The Mayor was clear that the Council had not made all the achievements alone but had done so through partnership working and with the support of businesses, community and voluntary sector in the borough.

She praised Council staff who had worked tirelessly and professionally to deliver an excellent level of service to the residents of North Tyneside and expressed disappointment to criticisms of staff or their representatives in the press recently and expressed that without their support and cooperation the achievements made would not have been realised.

The Mayor stated that in the past 4 years many great achievements had been made and she would continue to work to ensure North Tyneside was an area that people were proud to live in, work in and to call their home.

C91/03/17 Questions by Members of the Council

1. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor J Wallace

Can the Mayor explain why a resident paid £2.40 more to take his grandchild swimming in North Tyneside during half term than he did the following week, bearing in mind that they went at the same time on the same day of the week and they were both in possession of Ease cards on both occasions?

Councillor E Darke replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows:

The resident will have paid the standard price during half term as opposed to the discounted rate which is offered during term time. Off-peak prices were introduced over 10 years ago to encourage use during quieter periods. It has proven useful and it has not been an issue with our customers.

Councillor Wallace asked the following supplementary question:

Given the concern about keeping healthy and taking preventative action to ensure people can keep healthy throughout their lives starting with young children I think the policy should be reviewed, does the Cabinet Member agree?

Councillor E Darke replied as follows:

No

2. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor E Hodson

Does the Mayor share my regret that the new Civic car is diesel fuelled rather than by cleaner electricity?

Councillor J Stirling replied on behalf of the Elected Mayor as follows

I know Councillor Hodson has received extensive background on the civic car, its costs and its environmental ratings. So this information will not be new to him.

Personally, I have every confidence that officers have fully considered all of the environmental and economic issues associated with this vehicle replacement, and selected the most appropriate solution for North Tyneside Council.

The new Civic Car has a Euro 6 engine which is designed to reduce harmful pollutants from vehicle exhausts. The aim of Euro 6 is to reduce levels of harmful car and van exhaust emissions, both in petrol and diesel cars. Importantly the knock-on effect of reducing these pollutants means improved fuel economy and lower CO2 emissions.

Therefore, I do not share Councillor Hodson's regret.

Councillor Hodson asked the following supplementary question:

At the time of purchasing the new civic car was the Mayor aware that the diesel exhaust is damaging to health and the Ministry of Transport advises the public not to purchase diesel cars and that London and Birmingham are to restrict diesel cars into their cities. Was she also aware that North Tyneside civic car duty is ideally suited to electrical propulsion. If she was why on earth did she elect to purchase the polluting diesel jaguar car rather than a cleaner electrical car?

Councillor Stirling replied as follows:

As I have explained the civic car has a Euro 6 engine that cuts harmful emissions. Some of the journeys are multiple journeys for example going from a meeting in Darlington to a meeting in Durham.

The Nissan Leaf with the smaller engine can only do 120 miles on one battery. The larger engine claims to do up to 155 miles. This can change depending on the weather conditions and the efficiency of the battery.

With regards to hybrid cars the Toyota Pruis has only a 30 mile electrical range.

A range of cars were considered and we came up with the best solution, the Jaguar.

3. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor E Hodson

Could the Mayor update Council concerning the Combined Authority's uncertainty as to whether to work with the Government, in order to gain greater independence and authority for the Region, or not?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

On 6 September 2016, by a majority of four members to three, the North East Combined Authority voted not to proceed with the North East devolution deal that had been agreed with Government on 23 October 2015.

Since then, the three authorities who voted to proceed with the devolution deal – Newcastle, Northumberland and ourselves – have been working together on a potential devolution deal for North of Tyne and we have started formal negotiations with the Government.

4. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor E Hodson

Could the Mayor inform Council as to the Combined Authority's plan of action by which to secure the best possible Brexit result, for the North East of England - including North Tyneside?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

In the absence of any clear plan of action from Government together with clear indications of the impact for local authorities, there is only very limited work that can be done either at a North East, or North Tyneside level.

The North East Combined Authority has stated publicly that “The North East has seen significant benefits of membership of the European Union in the form of access to European trade and investment and through European funding, which has helped to regenerate our towns and cities, support business, invest in science and support our rural economy” and there is clear concern about the potential loss of significant EU funding.

In September 2016 the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee added the impact of Brexit to their work programme. Also at an officer level the Economic Directors group have put in place ‘a significant programme of work looking at the impact of Brexit on the economy, local authority finances and the region more widely’.

The North East Combined Authority's Governance Committee has also identified a risk around future funding uncertainties following the EU referendum.

Councillor Hodson asked the following supplementary question:

Does the Mayor agree that Council needs to be routinely informed about decisions made by the Combined Authority in a more formal way than in Members' questions to the Mayor especially with regards to Brexit.

Mayor replied as follows:

I agree with you and as soon as I know anything regarding Brexit I will inform the Council.

5. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor J Wallace

Since fishing has been an important industry in North Tyneside and will be even more important once we leave the European Union, what is the Elected Mayor doing to encourage that industry?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

I recognise the importance of the fishing industry both in terms of its economic benefits and its place in North Tyneside's heritage. We have worked hard with colleagues in Northumberland and members of our own fishing community over the last year or so to secure funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The £800,000 funding will support community-led local development in fishing communities through a FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) over the next three years. This shows that not only are we very successful in attracting inward investment to Cobalt, Quorum and Swans, but we are

committed and recognise other traditional parts of our economy. We will continue to explore other means to assist the fishing industry going forward and monitor the impact of Brexit.

The key focus of the funding will be :

- to support the area to adapt to the reformed Common Fisheries Policy; and
- to maximise economic growth opportunities within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Four initial priorities have been identified for the use of the funding :

- i) Development of small scale infrastructure at ports and harbours;
- ii) Marketing, branding and processing;
- iii) Training, retention, recruitment, diversification; and
- iv) Collaborative and applied research between fishermen and scientists.

However, we must also recognise the lack of uncertainty beyond North Tyneside as we look to Central Government to set their vision for the fishing industry. This will have a huge impact. All we can do at this stage is offer the support we can locally.

Perhaps Councillor Wallace could ask the Prime Minister for a view as it will ultimately be up to Central Government to decide on the future for all fishing industry.

Councillor Wallace asked the following supplementary question:

Since fishing is of huge importance and we are agreed on that, do you agree with me that it's both surprising and disgraceful that the fishing industry, fishing or even fish has not been mentioned once since 2012 in the House of Commons by the Labour Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, North Tyneside's MP Mary Glendon.

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

I was elected to represent the residents of North Tyneside, the industries in North Tyneside and the work people do here in North Tyneside. I have no power at a national level except to complain. And sometimes I'm taking quite a back by some of the remarks you come out with outside of the house. It really is most upsetting, sometimes we have to have respect and stay at a level where we respect each other and sometimes it really does upset me that you can lower the tone sometimes in this house.

[\(See statement of clarification\).](#)

6. Question to the Elected Mayor by Councillor S Graham

The three ward Councillors for Whitley Bay have grave concerns about the government's proposal to close the DWP office in Whitley Bay in March 2018. This closure will require local residents in the coastal area of the Borough seeking work or training opportunities to travel to the nearest DWP office in North Shields. In many cases this additional travel will cause financial hardship to local residents who are on very low incomes.

Would the Elected Mayor write to the Secretary of State expressing the grave concerns of the Council and call for the proposed closure to be reversed?

The Elected Mayor replied as follows:

Thank you for your question in relation to the proposed closure of Whitley Bay Jobcentre Plus.

Can I first of all say that I share your concerns about the proposed closure and have already spoken to Alan Campbell, MP who I understand has written to Damian Hinds MP the Minister for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions to highlight his concerns and that of the claimants, residents, staff, unions and local businesses from this area.

We recognise that for many local claimants, whom will still require face to face interviews and for whom travel will be further and more difficult, the move may lead to more travel costs for which it is unclear whether there will be reimbursement. This means that some claimants may face further hardships from no fault of their own.

I will therefore be taking the opportunity to write to the Minister myself setting out this Council's grave concerns in relation to the proposed closure and asking that the proposed closure be reversed.

In addition to this, I have asked our Chief Executive to contact the District Manager from Job Centre Plus about the proposals and the potential impact on our residents having to travel from Whitley Bay to North Shields as well as the Community and Voluntary Sector having to pick up the demand for support created by the job centre proposal.