

BOROUGH COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 1 AUGUST 2024

**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Borough Council was held on Thursday, 1 August 2024 in the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar, Yorkshire, TS10 1TD.

**PRESENT** His Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor N Bendelow),  
Councillors P Berry, A Brown, C Cawley, R Clark,  
B Clarke, P Chaney, J Craven, C Curr, U Earl, K Evans,  
M Fairley, T Gray, P Grogan, I Hart, C Hannaway,  
N Hargreaves, J Hart, M Head, B Hunt, C Jones, J Joy,  
S Kay, K King, J Lavan, T Learoyd, C Massey, J McCue,  
P McInnes, C Morgan, G Nightingale, M O'Donoghue,  
M Ovens, L Pallister, D Powlay, C Pugh, C Richardson,  
L Robson, L Rynn, P Salvin, Stuart Smith, B Suthers,  
J Symon, D Taylor, J Thompson, P Thomson and  
L White.

**OFFICIALS** B Archer, E Dale, A Pearson, P Rice, J Sampson,  
C Styles and P Winstanley.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors  
I Attwood, A Brook, G Cutler, W Davies, M Fletcher, G Jeffery, S Martin,  
J Neal, A Oliver, C Quartermain and V Rider.

111 **To receive Declarations of Interest.**

112 **To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 June 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to Councillor J Hart being marked as present in the attendance list.

113 **To note the attendance matrix from the last meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the attendance matrix be noted but amended to include Councillors J Hart and Ovens as being in attendance at the meeting on the 27 June 2024.

114 **To receive any Announcements from the Mayor, the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members.**

**The Mayor**

The Mayor announced that over the last couple of months he had attended over 30 engagements stating that so far it had been a busy but enjoyable time.

After a request from the Mayor, Commsave Credit Union had kindly

donated £1000 to Zoe's Place Baby Hospice Bath Appeal and would also be donating £1000 towards St John's Church roof appeal.

He had two charity fundraising events lined up so far, on Friday, 27th September a Charity Race Night at Cleveland Golf Club and on Friday, 8th November a Charity Night at Loftus Social Club involving the Beer Pigs. Details would be sent out soon and he hoped that Members would be able to lend their support.

### **The Leader**

Members stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect and to remember the victims of the Southport tragedy.

"A new initiative which will save some of our families hundreds of pounds a year has been approved.

We will enrol children entitled to free school meals automatically, rather than parents being required to opt-in to register.

Hundreds of households will benefit from the new registration scheme, although parents and guardians will be able to opt-out if they wish.

As well as saving families about £400 a year per child, more enrolment could lead to extra Government funding amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds for schools across the borough.

The scheme will bring a better outcome for our families and our schools.

Our officers have been speaking at schools across the borough the dangers of vaping after some vapes across the North East were found containing Class B drugs such as 'spice' and cannabis.

Trading Standards officers and Cleveland Police officers toured secondary schools to warn about the serious health conditions which could be caused by the dangerous vapes.

Four new 'micro-woods' would be created in our borough for people to enjoy for generations to come.

They are part of a national scheme to create woodland in urban areas which are easily accessible to the public.

At least two of the woods will be at locations in the Eston area, complementing the wider Eston regeneration work, and further details will be announced in the coming weeks.

A pot of money is now available both to people who want to start a business in Redcar and those running existing businesses.

The Town Centre Grant Scheme aims to encourage entrepreneurial activity and growth in Redcar.

In total, the pot is worth £250,000 made available to applicants on a match-funded basis across categories which encourage more business activity in Redcar.

Finally, it is excellent news to see Coronation Park in Loftus is now being enjoyed by our residents.

The restoration of the park was driven by a strong sense of community spirit and the new facilities enhance the other public services nearby.”

115 **To receive any Announcements from the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service).**

There were no announcements from the Managing Director.

116 **To consider Questions from the Public for which Notice has been given.**

**Question 1 Question from M Melling to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Climate and Culture.**

“In relation to the cabinet meeting of 19th March 2024, Councillor Head requested that any proposed SLA between RCBC and a community group taking over Laburnum Road Community Library be made available to all members prior to any final decision, can you confirm this will happen?”

Will the RCBC Laburnum Road Community Library still be branded as a council Library and be part of the council library services offer in the event that it is taken over by a community group?

What current council services will RCBC ensure are still offered at Laburnum Road Community Library in the event that it is taken over by a Community Group?

Appendix attached:

RCBC current services include but not limited to:

- Bus Passes new/renewal/lost
- Blue badge applications
- Access to Public PCs
- Scanning, photocopying and printing (including from their own device)

- Referral of customers to housebound service if appropriate
- Audiobook service for sight impaired
- Ancestry Online
- Which Online
- Book request from any library in Redcar & Cleveland
- Activities and events throughout the year weekly/monthly
- Assisting with BorrowBox (eBooks, eAudiobooks and ePress)
- Support with applying/paying for other council services (where capacity allows), for example, recent Annual Green Waste Subscription
- Customer Service trained staff in all library buildings so a wide variety of queries can be assisted.”

**Question 2 Question from M Edwards to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Climate and Culture.**

“In the event that Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will the library continue to be an all inclusive space at all times and be open 5 days a week as opposed to the current 2?

In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will the Community Group volunteers be trained by RCBC to ensure continued Library and Council Services Standards are met?

If the preferred community group is unable to continue operating, what is the RCBC contingency plan for Laburnum Road Community Library?”

**Question 3 Question from E Finley to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Climate and Culture.**

“In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will the RCBC library service Sparks software system remain and be operated by the Community Group at Laburnum Road Community Library?

In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will RCBC continue to provide and maintain computers for free public use?

In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will RCBC continue to provide and maintain printer and scanner for public use?”

**Question 4 Question from J Overfield to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Climate and Culture.**

“In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will all activities within Laburnum Road Community Library continue to be free?”

In the event that the Laburnum Road Community Library is taken over by a community group, will the library continue to be classed as a Warm, Safe, Space offering free hot drinks?

The book and toy stock in Laburnum Road Community Library has been recently reduced. Why have books and toys been removed and what would be the proposed level of book and toy stock in the event the library is taken over by a community group?”

**Councillor Richardson replied as follows:**

“A minimum requirement for any voluntary organisation taking over Laburnum Library would be to maintain current levels of opening and as much of the current library offer as possible. The Voluntary Sector Association have confirmed that this will include free public computer access.

As previously communicated it will still be a RCBC library and the main points in the SLA have been shared, they are, that the book borrowing service will stay and computers will stay. The finer points are being worked out and naturally are confidential but where viable services will remain.

In terms of other council services these are available at the main Redcar library and will continue to be. We also have our home delivery service for those housebound and Borrow Box. Trained library staff will not be present at the location I think this has been made clear in previous questions.

The space will be utilised by the VCA to be more inclusive and offer a lot more to the local community than a library open only twice a week.

It is unlikely the VCA will be able to hire it out 5 days a week because the aim is the VCA will be running lots of vibrant clubs, events and activities and as they do so at their locations. However, I must point out that there are a range of venues in Redcar East including Durham Road Community Centre, Zetland Church, Park Avenue Community Grocery store and church and many clubs meet in the Rugby Club and Cleveland Bay.

To the questions:

Will activities continue to be free?

I would expect the VCS to put on a range of free and paid for activities as they do at their location.

Will it be a warm safe space with free drinks?

It will be warm, it will be safe and I don't know if and when they will serve any drinks.

Will the book and toy stock be reduced?

The book stock will need to be reduced a little as it takes up a lot of space on the ground floor, this is part of the SLA under negotiation but the stock has been invested in and we will ensure good rotation.

Will they still use Sparks software system and printer and scanner?

Do not know this is not defined yet.

As much as possible the aim is to replicate the current system whilst not preventing any opportunities for the VCA to deliver everything they want to in the community.

If for any reason the building is handed back we will advertise and relet the building. It has had a lot of interest and I do not doubt another provider would be found.

I recognise the concerns of the community and the uncertainty a change like this brings but I do hope the new VCA is welcomed and engaged with positively by established community groups because they certainly are passionate, vibrant and so committed to what they do. I am excited to be able to tell you all about them and their offer as soon as I can.

Laburnum Road Library is currently open for 14 hours a week over 2 days and currently has 183 active borrowers. Along with Dormanstown Library, it had the lowest number of new people joining in 2023/24. The number of books borrowed has reduced by approximately 60% since 2018."

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**To consider and agree any Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees.**

**Children in our Care and Care Leavers Update Report.**

The Cabinet Member for Children updated Members on the work undertaken by the Council's Children in our Care and Care Resources Service.

**RESOLVED** that on the successful motion of Councillor Suthers and duly seconded by Councillor Brown that the information in the report be noted

118 **To consider Reports.**

The Leader provided a summary of decisions that had been taken recently using provisions as set out in the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules and that required reporting to Council.

- Auto-enrolment of Free School Meals and maximising Pupil Premium Funding across Redcar and Cleveland.
- Potential value: £1,575,000-£2,200,000

**:-NOTED.**

119 **To consider Motions.**

No Motions had been received.

120 **To appoint Members.**

**RESOLVED** that the following change to Committee Membership be approved:-

**TVCA Audit and Governance Committee**

Councillor P Grogan to replace Councillor C Pugh

121 **To reply to Questions from Members of the Council.**

**Question 1: Question from Councillor Martin to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.**

"In May I asked the following question about enforcement:

I, like most of our fellow councillors and residents are sick and tired of illegal and dangerous parking within Redcar and Cleveland. When reporting to enforcement we are told that officers will attend but it's often too late.

When speaking to the team I was shocked to learn that there are only 12 enforcement officers in the whole of Redcar and Cleveland which means there are 4 – 8 staff on duty at any one time. Enforcement deals with everything from parking, fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, untaxed vehicles and certain anti-social behaviour.

How can this small team deal with the pressures we put on them and offer the service that our residents deserve? This is the only service

which theoretically pays for itself through revenue raised by issuing fines.

No matter which Ward I am in throughout the day, I will see 10 - 20 cars daily parked on yellows lines. This is potentially £700 - £1400 a day in lost revenue (a fine for parking on double yellow lines is £70).

Investment in additional enforcement officers will more than pay for itself in the revenue raised for the council, in turn keeping our streets safer and our residents happy.

Will the Cabinet consider increasing the number of enforcement officers so that we can improve services for our residents and at the same time, increase revenue for the Council?"

The response to this was that Cllr Brook does not want to develop a fine culture within R&C, that it's more about education, and there is no money for extra officers.

On Saturday 20th July, Cllr Brook made a Facebook post saying he had instructed enforcement to take a hardline on littering on our coasts.

Do you think it's acceptable to instruct enforcement to clamp down on littering when road safety and the safety of residents is at risk due to illegal and dangerous parking? Surely this should be higher up the list for enforcement than littering?

By instructing officers to clamp down on littering, isn't this going against what you previously said regarding my question, not wanting to have a fine culture and that it's about education?"

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:-**

"In the absence of Councillor Martin the member will receive a written response to his question."

**Question 2: Question from Councillor Smith to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.**

"Saltburn residents and Ward Councillors feel that they have been let down yet again by this Labour Administration in trying to address the many historic road traffic problems and issues we have along Marine Parade.

The protest group Saltburn Against Promenade Changes appear to have a hot line to, and the ear of your party.

Can I ask what hold do this group have over this administration?"

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:-**



“This particular group hold no hold over this administration whatsoever. They did extend an invite to me where I attended a public meeting last year with about 300 residents all opposing the parking and highway changes to the promenade and the upper promenade. The Council will also be aware that Councillor Hannaway did attend unfortunately you were detained elsewhere as was Councillor Thomson. Every person in that room, including approximately 300 residents were strongly opposed to what the Ward Members had put forward. I listened to the residents of Saltburn on that particular issue and they were telling me very much differently to what you suggested Councillor Smith. On the overnight campervan charges again, we listened to the people of Saltburn, the residents, and they were 2 to 1 against banning overnight campervan parking. Just from the feedback that we are getting from our residents and from myself attending Saltburn I would probably say our ear was closer to your residents than your own are.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Smith to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.**

Can I convey to you the frustration sometimes anger and disappointment of Saltburn Ward Councillors and how we have been treated by your administration over the several parking proposals which we have been trying to implement in Saltburn. The lack of consultation at times from officers and portfolio holders has been a disgrace and if I may say so disrespectful to the democratic elected representatives in the town. We are still waiting an official announcement in a press release announcing the latest TRO decision. If it had not been the apparent disclosure to the Saltburn Against Promenade Changes Group it would still not be out in the public domain. You yourself make decisions on the hoof by declaring at the public meeting that Saltburn Masterplan consultation was abandoned a total waste of £50,000 of council taxpayers money. This decision was made without consulting the Ward Councillors and no doubt officers. What angers me the most is this constant leaking of information to this protest group who let it be said do not represent the wishes and desires of the majority of Saltburn residents. They have received information and updates well before we have and in fact if I needed to know any progress on these matters, I just had to go on their Facebook page to find out. Your administration has a very strong and good working relationship with the Group Leaders, why is this? It is strongly felt within the Town that you are keeping various members of this group sweet so they will stand as Labour candidates at the next local election, is this true?

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

I do not particularly know any members of this group, as members of this group, I think I know one as a resident. However, I will apologise for the social media post. I believe it was an officer of the Council, nothing to do with this administration, who e mailed a resident informing them of the decision after they had spoken to the 3 Ward Councillors. To say we are

not consulting is absolutely untrue. The Masterplan unfortunately was not written by the people of Saltburn it was written particularly by the Councillors instilling what they believe is the right solution and they may well be the best solution but it was not written, as the promenade clearly shows, by the people of Saltburn and they were not consulted. We inherited a document that the residents were not consulted on so I make no apologies. We are listening to the residents of Saltburn hence why we are putting £200,000 into the future long term future of the cliff lift, hence why we are resurfacing the upper promenade, replacing all the handrails, replacing the benches down the lower promenade as well. I absolutely refute the claims that we are not listening to the people of Saltburn because we absolutely are. If we put a consultation out and particularly when it is 2 to 1 against and if we do it how is that an example of us not consulting or listening Councillor Smith. This is the bit lost in translation that I get confused with.”

**Question 3: Question from Councillor Hargreaves to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.**

“Will this Council commit to the residents that they will defend the decision made by the Regulatory Committee in December regarding the Rowan Garth Extension and will they be open and honest about discussions taking place going forward?”

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

Just to clarify Planning, Planning Law and legislation is not for the administration to decide or overturn it is the Regulatory Committee and the Chair of that committee. However, what I will say the Monitoring Officer’s decision not to appeal was based on the Kings Chamber Barrister who we would assume was qualified to give legal advise to the King. He said there was a 95% chance of the appeal not being upheld. Bearing in mind I voted against this development two years ago and a price of potentially up to £500,000. I suppose what the question is individually as us all as councillors would you gamble £500,000 on a 95% chance of losing. That would be the question I would ask us all individually as a council administration. We have no power over planning law and what the regulatory Committee do.”

**Supplementary Questions by Councillor Hargreaves:**

“Can you tell us if any elected members were involved in the decision-making process or is this just another case of this administration letting officers run this Council”

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“At least get the process correct. It is the Regulatory Committee which has nothing to do with the Labour Administration. Do not play politics with

it. I understand that there might a potential by election coming up very soon, close to this development. I understand the need to get it right for the residents but let's not play politics with this or try to blame Labour for it. Many people who were here in 2015/16 voted against the first 800 houses and then the Conservative Secretary of State overturned the result or we would not even be here so let's not play politics and try to blame a Labour administration. The Monitoring Officer has made a delegated decision, outside of the administration, on the advice of the barrister, nothing to do with Labour."

**Question 4: Question from Councillor Grogan to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.**

"Volunteer groups are vital to our communities within our borough, like they are anywhere else up and down the country.

**These** groups provide a service that without them, people, businesses, and our areas would be poorer without them, and this authority would be in a poorer state financially than it already is.

We must help these groups as much as possible, from the Friends of Redcar Cemetery, New Marske in Bloom, even an organisation close to you, Grangetown Generations and the borough wide South Gare Litter Pickers.

This weekend I was litter picking in Kirkleatham with the South Gare Litter Pickers and learned what their role entails and how this Council helps their group.

I was surprised to learn that the Litters Pickers have been given some criteria by officers to follow when it comes to litter picking in our communities.

They have been told to stick with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council areas only if they want the rubbish to be collected for disposal. This causes some confusion especially with mapping issues, as they are aware of private companies and private land but, this also leads to areas under the mapping control of Beyond Housing, or private estates and any other housing association controlled areas.

With the change of how Beyond Housing and the Council deal with fly tipping due to costs and doing their own thing due to those raising costs, the South Gare Litter Pickers have been told the Council will not dispose of the litter waste from private housing estates and social housing areas.

Is it true that this community group can't collect litter from these areas and have its waste disposed of for free?"

**In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“All private landowners are responsible for the clearance and disposal of waste on their own land. This includes social housing companies like Beyond Housing.

Following the end of the SLA with Beyond Housing whereby RCBC collected and disposed of their waste. Beyond are also responsible for their own disposal costs.

Redcar and Cleveland have a long history of working alongside community groups as well as its partners, and whilst we would not collect and dispose of waste collected on Beyond Land, we have and continue to support Beyond on any days of actions/events with other partners including the Fire Brigade, where we support the removal of large items to enable safe and effective use of skips – this is completed under a community safety partnership arrangement.”

**Question 5: Question from Councillor Pugh to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

“Across the Borough we regularly see utility companies dig up newly laid road surfaces and footpaths, in order to carry out work, and then they leave the road in an inferior condition to which they found it.

We've recently had this at Normanby Top. As Councillors will know, our High Street in Normanby was shut for 12 weeks and businesses had a terribly difficult time, but we did have a resurfaced road as well as a new traffic light system to show for it.

Since that work was carried out and finished in June, utility companies have already dug up sections of the road and replaced the freshly laid surface with a lesser, and different coloured, material. Residents, business owners, and those who drive through are rightly unimpressed with this.

So, my question to the cabinet member for Highways is, what can the Council do to ensure that this happens less often, and when it does happen, how can we ensure the resurfacing work by utility companies is to a better standard? “

**In the absence of Councillor Quartermain, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“All utility works in the highway are undertaken under the new Roads and Street Works Act legislation.

Once a scheme is completed, under the New Roads and Street Works Act a Section 58 restriction is put on the carriageway, 2 years for resurfacing, 3 years for reconstruction of the carriageway and 1 year for resurfacing a footpath. This prohibits utilities from undertaking any

planned work until it comes out of this restriction.

The legislation does not allow us to stop them from undertaking emergency work, from supplying a customer with a new connection or from repairing utility apparatus.

When a utility company needs to carry out an excavation, we arrange a site meeting before they start work, so the extent of the carriageway/footpath to be reinstated can be agreed before the work commences and the materials should always be of the same type as the existing materials.

Unfortunately, at Normanby top not long after the council's works were completed a Northumbrian Water inspection cover and chamber failed in the carriageway. Due to the position of this apparatus in the carriageway a temporary make safe was installed to ensure the carriageway could remain open.

A permanent repair and reinstatement is currently being planned and developed by Northumbrian Water.

These works fall outside the restriction of the Section 58 restriction."

**Question 6: Question from Councillor Learoyd to Councillor Smith, Chair of the Regulatory Committee.**

"With respect to the decision for the council not to defend the case of "Land Adjacent to Silverdale Gardens" (R/2024/0128/FF), has the Regulatory Committee held a vote to overturn the previous decision to reject the proposal made 20 December 2023?"

**Councillor Smith replied as follows:**

"No, no vote was taken."

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Learoyd:**

"Councillor Smith, do you recall during your 8 years as Chair of the Planning Committee an occasion where an officer has applied pressure on your committee or on you as an individual not to reject a planning application based on fear of appeal costs or similar."

**Councillor Smith replied as follows:**

The Regulatory Committee did not make a formal decision on this but had a briefing from the Monitoring Officer and were consulted ahead of him making his decision, and accepted the position that we are in. The decision could technically have been referred back to the committee, but the committee would have faced exactly the same situation.

Planning decisions are difficult because residents are often opposed to developments and councillors naturally want to support them but, as in this case, there are sometimes no legitimate planning reasons for refusing planning permission.

The committee did its best to support the residents in this case, and if an appeal had not been lodged then it would have succeeded in doing so. However, developers have a legal right to submit an appeal and whilst the council would always attempt to try and defend a committee's refusal of permission if there was some chance of success, in this case we have a very firm expert legal advice that we simply cannot win and that costs would be awarded if we continue to try and defend this decision.

I am quite willing to share that information received from the barrister and I think that it is available to all Councillors if they wish to see it however, I will go through it;

There were 4 reasons why the committee refused the application:

1. The proposed development due to the access along Silverdale Gardens, would be detrimental in terms of highway safety and would have an adverse impact on residential amenity. The development is therefore contrary to parts p and b of policy SD4 of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (2018).

The barristers advise on this was:

The proposed access accords with allocation policy H3.14(b) and with the Council's evidence to the Local Plan inspection that an access from the A174 would be unacceptable. Therefore, there is no policy conflict with the access per se. In the absence of any technical evidence from a suitable qualified highways expert, I do not consider this RfR to be defensible. Furthermore, unless expert highways evidence can be presented to the appeal to defend the RfR, then there is a high likelihood of a costs award against the Council.

Reason 2 for refusal by the Committee:

2. The proposed development due to the numbers proposed and the location, would be overdevelopment of an existing green space. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy SD3 and part c of policy SD4 of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (2018).

The barristers advise on this was:

It is wholly unreasonable to refuse an allocated development, which means the principle of development was established, on the basis of conflict with a settlement boundary policy (SD3). SD3 does not apply to the scheme.

The reasons for refusal is totally indefensible and the costs application is nigh on impossible to resist.

Reason 3 for the refusal:

The Council is well in excess of the housing requirements and the development is not needed. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy H1 of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (2018).

The barristers advise on this was:

The reason for refusal is nonsensical.

The housing requirement in H1 is a minimum, and it is delivered though allocation in H3, including the allocation of the site in H3.14 in the Local Plan. Refusing the scheme on the basis of conflict with H1 fundamentally undermines the adopted local development plan.

This RfR cannot be sensibly defended. I cannot see a rational argument to resist the costs application.

Reason 4 for the refusal:

The development of the site would result in a loss of biodiversity and nature conservation which would have a detrimental impact on the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to part o of policy SD4 of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (2018).

The barristers advise on this was:

As set out in the officers report the scheme will result in a net gain in biodiversity units with a net gain of 2.85 units in relation to habitats and a gain of 0.74 hedgerow units. Giving a net gain of 25.25% in the habitat category and 115.06% in the hedgerow category.

There were no objections to the scheme from Natural England.

The RfR alleges conflict with SD4(o). This policy requires development to “respect or enhance the landscape, biodiversity.”

Given the detail in the application, the consultation responses and the officer’s report, and in the absence of any contrary expert evidence, I cannot see how this reason will be defended. I also think the costs application likely to succeed.

And finally he concluded:

In short, on the information before me, the Council’s chances of success at this appeal are vanishingly small, it is indefensible. The costs application is very likely to succeed.

So, Councillor Learoyd you may want to continue to act recklessly with the finances of this Local Authority, which are perilous to say the least at the moment and no doubt you will continue to make false and groundless planning promises to your social media following but I am sure the majority within this chamber do not support your stance. So, to continue with this appeal would waste hundreds of thousands of pounds of council taxpayers money equivalent to 0.5% council tax rise for the Borough so difficult though it may be this is clearly the only sensible decision.”

**Question 7: Question from Councillor Learoyd to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.**

“The planning application Land Adjacent to Silverdale Gardens (R/2020/0128/FF) was rejected by the planning committee on 20 December 2023. It was done so with Cllr Neal in the chair. Cllr Neal was in the chair as Taylor Wimpey requested that I not be the chair in an email dated 20 October 2023 to a planning officer [email FOI release can be provided].

TW's decision to go to appeal first emerged 22 April 2024 in an email to the same planning officer [email FOI release can be provided]. The FOI reveals an extensive dialogue on and off email with Pegasus, Taylor Wimpey's agent.

Councillors and residents were not notified of the appeal until 26 June 2024. The above planning officer, when asked on 1st May 2024 about the appeal claimed to have not heard back from the applicant.

On 25 July 2024, I became aware from a planning inspector notification of Redcar and Cleveland Council withdrawing their defence. For the clarity of councillors, no case or hearing normally occurs when a settlement is made outside of court.

The effective end of this case was determined by the council's monitoring officer acting as the legal officer. In an email dated 26 July 2024 the monitoring officer justified their decision to remove the council's defence on cost grounds.

To remind councillors, the definition of a monitoring officer according to the government is as follows: "to report on matters they believe to be illegal or amount to maladministration, to be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of councillors and officers, and to be responsible for the operation of the council's constitution."

In their reply to my email, 26 July 2024 questioning, of which all councillors were copied in, the council's monitoring officer states:

"I have delegated authority under the scheme of delegation to deal with legal proceedings" as indicated the constitution at 43. The power states



as chief legal officer an officer can withdraw from a legal case.

However, a planning appeal is not any legal case but a planning case governed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Case law makes clear that an officer does not have the power to override a prior planning committee decision, particularly when it comes to cost grounds.

Cases applied:

R v Tendering Council [2008].

Blacker, R (On the Application Of) v Chelmsford City Council)

R v RBKC, ex parte Stoop [1992] 1 PLR 58

In the case: R (Miles) v Tonbridge & Malling BC et al. [2020] EWHC 1608 it states:

"Some care needs to be taken in advising a Planning Committee of the risk of costs associated with defending its decision on a planning application, whether on appeal (and potentially through a costs award), or if its decision is challenged in the High Court. That is because the exercise of planning judgment under s.70 TCPA 1990 must be limited to considerations of the land use planning merits of the proposal."

It could be viewed independently that the action of the monitoring officer on 25 July 2024 to notify the planning inspector of the end of Redcar and Cleveland's defense of Silverdale Gardens, according to case law, is outside of the law. It could also be considered that their action as legal officer was in direct conflict with his own statutory role as Monitoring Officer and duty to report any matters believed to be illegal or maladministration to the government.

In addition, the monitoring officer's action could be externally regarded as bringing the council into disrepute as the democratic principle of the separation of powers has been breached, as councillor decision making has been overturned by an unelected officer.

How does the council leader view this matter?"

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:-**

"I think we have an opportunity here Councillor Learoyd not to peddle in false hope, mixed messages and misinformation. I feel their frustration as I voted twice against the development. If I was going to get a vaccination you have a doctorate so I would come to you for advise but I am not going to take your advise, or other members advise or social media over a barrister working on behalf of the King in his chambers. You make some very serious allegations so what I am going to do is refer this for investigation to the Managing Director of the Council because I am not an expert in this. However, I have read the legal advice where it opens up stating the original decision was entirely illogical and we would have about a 95% chance of losing any appeal essentially spending £500,000

of taxpayers money. I am not falling on either side of this as I have voted against and so I am not going to be a hypocrite having voted twice against it. I have read the legal advice and I understand why the Monitoring Officer did take the steps he did but again, as a layman, I am referring this matter to the Managing Director for an investigation and a full written response to yourself Councillor Learoyd.”

**Supplementary Question by Councillor Learoyd:**

“I do not want to confuse here the merits of the case with the action that has been taken. We are discussing the action that has been taken afterwards rather than the merits of accepting or rejecting the decision. I was not part of that decision and did not take part in the making of that decision. However, I do want just for clarification here bearing in mind the Monitoring Officer as defined in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as having responsibility to report a maladministration and failure under Part 3 of the Local Government Act 1974, to understand where your response came from please? For example, if I were to FOI e mails from this week, I hope that I would not find that your answer had any input from the Monitoring Officer?”

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“I can confirm that I have been in conversation with the Council Solicitor Andrew Nixon on this particular point because you are right it would be a complete conflict of interest hence why I have referred it to the Managing Director to investigate and get back to you fully. Just to take us back to this political messaging behind this legal advise is that this Council would lose £500,000 at a time when we are overspending due to the pressures within Children’s Services. I appreciate we all want to do our best for our residents but truly there is a balance between being populist and being true and that is all I ask for.”

**Question 8: Question from Councillor Thomson to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Climate and Culture.**

“There will be public firework displays held in November organised by a variety of organisations.

When these are held on private ground it appears that the local authority has no jurisdiction over the conduct of these events and although many members of the public may be subject to debris falling on their property as a result of fireworks released into the air, no action is taken by the local authority to prevent such anti-social actions, which can potentially result in personal injury and property damage.

Will Redcar & Cleveland Council consider its responsibility for community safety and issue clear instructive guidelines for any organiser of fireworks displays on how it should manage its event to mitigate against causing injury to individuals and damage to property, and clear guidance for

members of the public on how to register any instance of such damage or injury?”

**Councillor Richardson replied as follows:**

“The Council does not have any jurisdiction over events held on private land. If we issue generic guidance about events on private land it will be the wrong advice for some events because specifics matter. In the case where our guidance is followed and something goes wrong, we could be liable. We have seen this recently where someone got injured at the triathlon and sued the council even though it was not our event. They were able to do so because we supported and helped out and therefore essentially made ourselves partially liable.

Event organisers are encouraged to engage with all relevant authorities including (where applicable) the fire and police services. It is also recommended that organisers of larger events or those with specific requirements engage with the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) which can provide guidance as to things an event organiser might take into account when planning their event.

Any registration of damage should be made known to the police as it is not our responsibility.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Thomson:**

“If we are unable to exercise any statutory authority can Redcar and Cleveland Council engage more proactively with other relevant organisations possibly including the Health & Safety Executive as a matter of priority to promote a safer environment for local communities and residents in the proximity of public and privately organised firework displays or events during which fireworks will be used?”

**Councillor Richardson replied as follows:**

“Yes, we will look into it however, we must in the current climate draw a hard line about what is our responsibility.”

**Question 9; Question from Councillor Thomson to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport:**

“Following a motion passed unanimously by Full Council in 2022 to address the issues of Motor Home parking on Marine Parade and Glenside in Saltburn, the Council finally proposed in February this year to make an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 prohibiting the parking of motor caravans on those roads between the hours of 8pm and 8am.

A draft Order which, together with a statement of the Council’s reasons for proposing to make the Order, were made available for examination at

the Council Offices.

Any resident wishing to object to the proposed Order was invited to send the grounds of any objection in writing to Emma Garbutt by 26.3.24.

No invitation was given to residents to write in support.

It was not until social media campaign posts brought the Order to the attention of some residents, and also the intention of campaigners to contest the Order, that some residents felt that indications of support should be submitted as well.

In the event a net 37 persons registered objection.

In previous consultation on the Saltburn Masterplan when all residents were written to, 1194 replies were received and 58% of respondents highlighted Motor Home as a top priority issue.

A petition was also received during the publication of the Order.

Of the 1205 responses only 20 full postcodes from Saltburn were recorded, with the Council's guidelines for completion of petitions to include full addresses and that only eligible participants were to be those that resided, worked or studied in the area.

It is perhaps worth noting that petitioners were recorded from such places as Italy, Bulgaria, India, France, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, New Zealand, Cyprus, Mexico, Argentina, Germany Saudi Arabia, Greece, Serbia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Morocco, Australia, Romania, South Africa.

Will the Council ensure that all future decisions on evaluating TRO responses are objectively considered and every effort is made to ensure that all residents are made aware of the consultation process and invited to contribute.”

**In the absence of Councillor Quartermain, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“As Councillor Thomson knows the petition from Bulgaria, France and Germany was not considered in the decision making because of all the out of Borough people who filled out the petition which we are aware of through the campervan website and touring. The petition took no part in the decision making which you have been informed of. What did take part in the decision was the 2 to 1 consultation from residents that were against the proposals Councillor Thomson and that is what the decision was made on the back of.

The process for advertising and considering the traffic regulation order followed the standard procedure. We will review the request made and

implement where appropriate within the legal legislation. Just to reiterate the petition took no part on the decision not to instill the overnight parking ban on campervans.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Thomson:**

“I am interested to hear the response from the Leader because it is in writing from the Cabinet Member that the petition was one of the deciding factors in making the decision and that is in writing. If that is the case we have a total conflict of supply of information and we really need to look at this again as a matter of probity. Given the less than positive response, and I have explained why it is less than positive, will Council take note that notice will be served at the next Borough Council seeking to have this principle enshrined in the protocols for local consultation.”

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“I am not sure that required an answer.”

**Question 10 from Councillor Taylor to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.**

“I am following up on a question I raised last year regarding the maintenance and management of local wildlife areas and pavements. Despite assurances that these issues would be addressed last year and this year, it appears that the same problems persist, if not worsen. I previously suggested looking at successful initiatives implemented by other councils, such as Leeds.

In Leeds, the council has effectively utilized local businesses to sponsor dedicated wildlife areas, generating approximately £350,000 in revenue. This income helps fund the maintenance of these areas and supports the necessary equipment and teams. The only advertising we do is roundabout advertising, which brings in an extra £33,000 from 28 spots fully booked for a year. This is equivalent to £1,200 per sign. Leeds offers under £200 per sign but generates far greater revenue. The wildlife areas within their estates are maintained to a high standard, showcasing a beautiful and well-managed environment.

Given this successful model, I propose that our council explores similar sponsorship and advertising opportunities to enhance our local environment and ensure proper maintenance. This approach not only beautifies our community and helps with biodiversity, but also provides a sustainable source of revenue and keeps our residents safe and happy.

I believe adopting these strategies could significantly improve the upkeep of our local areas and provide a better quality of life for residents. I look forward to your response and hope we can work together to implement these positive changes.”

**In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“Some good suggestions there Councillor Taylor. As you are aware the Biodiversity Strategy just went through Cabinet and we will research with officers and get some of those excellent suggestions put in there.”

**Question 11 from Councillor Salvin to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

“We welcome the Council’s U turn on the provision of free parking in support of local business, something that we have been campaigning for during the last year. You may recall that the Conservative Group brought a motion to Council last July, on behalf of the residents of Guisborough and other towns across the borough, asking that we consider how we might continue to provide free parking when the grant from the TVCA expired.

The arguments against were vociferous, for example, from the Leader, and I paraphrase a bit, “Why should a child in care in Kirkleatham...children in Dormanstown and all the deprived wards receive less?”

From Cllr Robson, “Life expectancy in Redcar and Cleveland is lower than the national average, 35% of children are living in poverty.”

From Cllr Suthers, “...Service costs are ballooning...costs of looked after children are expanding dramatically.”

Can you please tell me what has changed since last year to bring about this U turn? How was it completely beyond the scope of any possibility last year because of the factors mentioned above, and now, suddenly, it’s possible?”

**In the absence of Councillor Quartermain, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“Thank you for your apolitical partisan question. I am going to surprise a lot of Members in the Chamber by referring to Mary Lanigan and her administration because she did the right thing. She went to Ben Houchen and asked him to extend the two hours free parking in Redcar and Cleveland. He did for six months until just after the local election, and I am not suggesting anything, but if you want to read into that. Yes, you are right you did bring a motion to this Council and the full Council voted to amend it and go to Ben Houchen. What did you do to ensure that it was empowered knowing as you would have done, being so passionate about the free parking, that it had already been extended by 6 months in Redcar and Cleveland. What did you do to support the Council and call for the Mayor to extend the free parking at that time? I do not think you did anything did you? If you cared so passionately about the free parking for the people of Guisborough and Redcar you would have absolutely

supported the Council's motion to ask the Mayor to extend the free parking because he had already done it 6 months prior to that. Now what has happened since then is we inherited the free parking coming to an end, not when the central government funding came to an end, because he had already chosen to extend it by 6 months, he had made that conscious decision to do that. We inherited a £10m overspend not because of the previous administration but because of Children's Services so we could not just sit there and immediately say we were going to cost £400,000-£500,000 whatever the big number was. Over the months we worked out how we could potentially listen and help businesses just like we did in Saltburn and now in a tiny spot which is not ideal. We would want to go further but we can't. We have had money come in from garden waste and other areas where we can listen so my plea to you would be where the Council goes to the TVCA and you put another motion in, and you feel this passionately about it, support it because the Mayor had already made the decision six months prior to that to extend the free parking because it was in his power and it was within your power to ask him to do it again."

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Salvin:**

"A new administration is rightly allowed to make mistakes. This time last year you were two months into your tenure as Council Leader and you had hard decisions to make and you were right to say it has taken you six months to a year to see where we are. When it comes to these particular parking charges should Labour have listened to us from day one to avoid this obvious mistake."

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

"Did you say the Mayor had offered us the 2 hour free parking back? Let's be honest it is politics. You have mentioned a U turn and should Labour listen? We are a brand new administration. Politics were played before the local elections so it was a big emotive issue to try to keep Labour out. We both know that which is why it was extended by six months and we inherited that. We did not start playing politics with the free parking, the Conservative Party did. What we have tried to do over the last year is to cost it in, listen to Councillor Curr, Hart, Robson and Suthers and residents. There has been no U Turn. We have done the best we possibly can and we will continue to do that. Councillor Taylor just made some really good suggestions that we will take on board. Lets leave the politics at the door and lets get on with serving the people of Redcar and Cleveland."

**Question 12: Question from Councillor Curr to Councillor Massey, Cabinet Member for Resources.**

"The Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee met earlier the day that this policy was announced. No mention was made at the meeting of the intention to reintroduce free parking. What is the relevance of a finance

committee if there is to be no discussion of a major, U turn policy decision that is bound to have resource implications, and instead it be announced on Facebook later that day?"

**Councillor Massey replied as follows:**

"Thank you for your question, Councillor Curr and thank you for your engagement in the scrutiny process which, I know is very thorough and in the Task and Finish Group with Councillor Thomson and I know you have played a leading role in that. In relation to the Resources Scrutiny and Improvement Committee and the relevance of the Committee in terms of the Constitution is to look over the Resources Directorate. This particular policy does not sit in the Resources Directorate it sits within the Growth Directorate. The other responsibilities of Resources Scrutiny and Improvement Committee is also to exercise a general scrutiny function and call in for the Council for the Constitution. Any non-programmed non budgeted issues are referred through the quarterly financial reports which go to Resources Scrutiny Committee but in effect it is not for our officers to come with every single line on the budget to every single meeting to tell us what happens. We know we will have certain over spends in some areas and certain under spends in other areas. We employ Corporate Directors to manage their budgets and report to Councillors on significant changes to the quarterly process. This particular policy is a trial across selected car parks but the implementation, financing and scrutiny of that trial sits elsewhere within the Growth Directorate. In terms of the Constitution itself Resources Portfolio, my portfolio and Resources Scrutiny does not have the responsibility for car parking. The Constitution very explicitly delegates to the Cabinet Member and specifically the Executive Director of Environment and Growth. In specific terms the Constitution references and this is a quote "that it can the Cabinet Member and Director determine, implement and operate a charging scheme on car parks" and that is a delegated power that sits within the Executive Director's gift in consultation with the Cabinet Member, in this case, Councillor Quartermain. Ultimately this decision was made by the Cabinet Member in consultation with the Leader and actioned under delegated powers and I was not part of that decision."

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Curr:**

"Was the policy decision discussed at Growth then if it comes within Growth? Thinking about the Scheme of Delegation I think my question remains and maybe it should have read what is the point of a Finance Scrutiny Committee under the current Scheme of Delegation because I am just beginning to wonder really how all these decisions are being made."

**Councillor Massey replied as follows:**

"It is not a Finance Scrutiny Committee it is a Resources Scrutiny and Improvement Committee and looks after the Directorate that is the



Resources Directorate. Myself and Phil Winstanley as the Director of Resources have a responsibility to manage the Council's finances yes, but those other resources committees and those other Directors and Corporate Directors have responsibility to look after their particular portfolio or Directorate areas so that is why I say this decision was not mine, it should not be mine, it should be Councillor Quartermain's in consultation with the Leader and the delegated authority which sits within the Executive Director which in this case is Brian Archer. The general point of the Resources Committee is going back to my previous answer which is it is there to hold the Resources Directorate to account and the reports that the Resources Directorate get. In essence it is there where anything is cross council and used to be Executive Scrutiny for those Members who were here quite a while ago. Resources still retains call in functions and call to action functions. In general sense Resources was not there to scrutinise this decision as it was not a decision of this particular directorate.

In terms of Growth Scrutiny which is not something I sit on myself but I would imagine this would not be something that would be reported ad hoc at the Growth Scrutiny Committee but potentially form part of any quarterly reports that particular committee has but again that sits with a different Cabinet Member, Director and service area than I lead on."

**Question 13: Question from Councillor Hannaway to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

"Councillor Quartermain, in a meeting on Thursday 11 July, you, I, and Cllrs Smith and Thomson, were informed by officers that TRO consultations only ask for objections to a proposed scheme, not support for it; in this case the Marine Parade overnight parking order. Despite this, you subsequently said in an RCBC Facebook post, "The consultation for this proposal received 81 objections and only 44 in support", treating the official solicitation of negative responses as if it were a public poll. Is this not clearly a misrepresentation of both the nature of the consultation and the views of Saltburn residents? You also stated in the same Council Facebook post, "In addition to this, the Council received a petition of 1,820 people who were against the introduction of the ban" but failing to mention that the vast majority of the petition signatories do not live in Saltburn, and many of them live in other parts of the UK. Why are you so determined to spin the truth in favour of a particular minority of Saltburn residents?"

**In the absence of Councillor Quartermain, Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

"I have already covered this question. If it said that in the Comms I did not see that or sign that comms off. However, again I repeat knowing the decision making the petition from outside the area signatories was not considered in the final decision. I apologise to the Councillor if the Council Comms has given the impression that it has but what I would say

is that it is really heartwarming to hear that people from Nigeria, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Bulgaria like to come to Redcar and Cleveland in their motorhomes otherwise they would not have signed the petition. Why discourage these people from coming and spending money locally, more proof that a ban is probably not the best for Saltburn.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Hannaway:**

“Clearly the people on Marine Parade talk of little else than the views of Nigerians. Is he aware that the Council’s Director of Growth cited that full figure of £1,820 and that petition as one of his reasons for not passing and did not mention all those different nationalities. Does he agree that it is an important fact that the survey for the abandoned Masterplan recorded much larger numbers concerned about mobile homes on Marine Parade than this consultation in which they were not asked. That Marine Parade, that Masterplan not only did we not write it we did not see it for 8 months after the officers had it and in that public meeting you raised your arm and said I am scrapping this master plan before you had even informed us the Ward Councillors. Do you recognise that nobody who lives in the vicinity of Marine Parade voted to spend the summer months in a 55 space free camper park with no facilities, late night noise, litter and chemical waste. Is he also aware that these campervans like to get themselves nice and level by parking their wheels sometimes all of their wheels on the pavement that has just been repaired with tarmac at great cost to this Authority. They also spread their street furniture across the pavement including recently a fire brazier. We believe the Council’s Director of Growth would have decided in favour of this ban had Councillor Quartermain not intervened for an obscure political reason and if this is the case could you ask these people in Saltburn for permission for the Ward Councillors to make a decision about the town now and again.”

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

“I do agree that sometime the vast majority of campervan owners are fine and behave perfectly fine and get rid of their waste perfectly fine however there are 1 or 2 who are not. However, when I asked for the number of complaints into the Council regarding this particular site the number was extremely small. Are you aware of how many people complained directly into the Council? I was aware that the Director told me that the petition had played no part in the decision making.”

**Question 14: Question from Councillor Joy to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.**

“Parking in and around the Borough has become another expense for residents, shoppers, workers and visitors to wrestle with in a time where we are still coping with the hangover from the cost-of-living crisis, but the council must balance revenue generation with access to our town centres, towns and villages.

I was pleased to see the recent decision to give free parking in Redcar and feel very hopeful that two more sites will be found. Clearly everyone will feel justified in making the case for their own area. Of course, representing Hutton ward in Guisborough I and my Guisborough colleagues would be pointing to Guisborough being the largest town in East Cleveland. People in Guisborough feel that we often are the Cinderella to Redcar's free parking offer so can I ask how the decision is being made to choose suitable sites?"

**Councillor Joy withdrew the above question as she had already had a written response.**

**Question 15: Question from Councillor J Hart to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.**

"Following the new Government just opening the borders and illegal immigrants being granted permission to stay, an estimated 90,000 of them.

Can you reassure me that our residents will not be pushed further down the queue who are already on social housing waiting lists."

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

"Due to the sensitive nature of the question and in the light of public safety and the events in Southport I am not willing to answer this question."

**Question 16: Question from Councillor Nightingale to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.**

"Will the leader of the council update members of the council on the results of his contacts with the new government over re-establishing a fairer deal for councils like Redcar & Cleveland that have suffered so grievously under the previous Conservative Government and that the new government will restore fair funding and ensure the council's finances are sustainable into the future?"

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

"I personally wrote to the Secretary of State for Education on 10 July to bring her attention the challenges and financial pressures facing our Children and Families Services. The letter highlighted that despite a number of initiatives we are undertaking and a re-distribution of Council funds through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Children & Families services continue to experience significant financial challenges, with funding for councils not keeping pace with the demand for services.

The letter asked Government to:

- Review the funding methodology for councils and restore the link between a council's need, ability to raise revenue locally and the funding provided by government.
- Restore multi-year finance settlements.
- Provide additional funding for council areas facing higher children's social care pressures.
- Reduce the number of grants subject to a competitive bidding process.
- Help to address issues of profiteering by providers, and to consider the role of Ofsted in tackling market insufficiency.

The Chancellor's audit of the public finances published this week has signalled the intention for:

- A more empowered, accountable and sustainable local government system.
- A consolidation of funding streams for local authorities into the Local Government finance settlement.
- A multi-year spending review, covering at least 3 years, to be announced in Spring 2025.

I have also contributed to a joint letter on behalf of the 12 North East councils, that has been sent to Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government earlier this week.

This letter identifies areas of opportunity where the Government can implement changes in local government funding to help local authorities and the system in which they operate.

In approaching the Spending Review, we have asked the Government to:

- fully recognise the financial pressures faced by local authorities – particularly those impacted by low tax raising capacity and deprivation-led financial challenges,
- address the inequity of not actioning the business rate reset,
- address the unfairness of the housing benefit regime linked to temporary and supported accommodation, and
- take the opportunity to redistribute a range of current funding streams particularly towards more deprived areas.

We have proposed 10 key asks for the government to consider, which we estimate would result in an additional £140 million across the 12 North East councils.

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Nightingale:**

"I think that we all know here that over the years £100m has been lost in grant as a result of the austerity programme of the previous administration in Whitehall which led to the burden of taxation being transferred to Council Tax. I sympathise very much with what you have

just been saying. In the election the Labour Party promised not to increase the burden of taxation on working people. In office they have found £21.9b of a blackhole. I am prepared to accept that that is very much likely to negate along with the office of budget responsibility. I saw the Chancellor's speech in Parliament and I saw the response of the Conservative opposition and it does seem that cuts in spending are highly likely. Therefore, will the Leader of the Council do more than just remind his Labour colleagues down in Government that any council tax increase rise next year will increase the tax burden on working people and of course it is a tax which is not based on the ability to pay. So will he remind his colleagues in Government that this is a tax on working people?"

**Councillor Brown replied as follows:**

"I will remind them".

The Mayor thanked Members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.