



Notice of a Meeting of the

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Proceedings of the
Borough Council and reports to Council**

February/March/April 2024

**Councillor Malcolm Head
Mayor**

**J Sampson
Managing Director (Head of Paid Service)**

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That a meeting of the Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council will be held on Thursday, 11 April 2024 at 2.00 pm. Please note that this meeting will be held in the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar, Yorkshire, TS10 1TD.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.

- 1. Apologies for absence.**
- 2. To receive Declarations of Interest.**
- 3. To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024**
- 4. To note the attendance matrix from the last meeting**
- 5. To receive any Announcements from the Mayor, the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members.**
- 6. To receive any Announcements from the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service).**
- 7. To consider Questions from the Public for which Notice has been given.**
- 8. To consider and agree any Reports from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees.**

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Minute No</u>	<u>Report Title</u>
A.	06.02.24	Cabinet	37	Loftus Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Document

- 9. To receive Reports from Portfolio Holders.**

A) Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources (HEREWITH)

(A period of 10 minutes, or such longer period at the discretion of the Mayor, will be set aside for questions which must be succinct and relate directly to matters within the report).

- 10. To consider Motions.**

11. To appoint Members.

Where there are vacancies or changes in appointment:

- To appoint Members of Council Bodies and Representatives to serve on other bodies to which Members are appointed by the Council; and
- To approve any changes to Committee membership and to appoint Chairs and Vice Chairs where appropriate.

12. To reply to Questions from Members of the Council.

Questions to the Chair, Members of the Cabinet, Chairs of any Committee or Sub-Committee, Members of the Fire Authority, Police and Crime Panel or the Tees Valley Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee, for which notice has been given.



JOHN SAMPSON

Managing Director (Head of Paid Service)
Redcar and Cleveland House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar
Yorkshire
TS10 1RT
3 April 2024

BOROUGH COUNCIL

 THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2024
BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Borough Council was held on Thursday, 29 February 2024 in the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar, Yorkshire, TS10 1TD.

PRESENT His Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor M Head),
Councillors I Attwood, L Belshaw, P Berry, A Brook,
A Brown, C Cawley, B Clarke, P Chaney, J Craven,
G Cutler, W Davies, U Earl, K Evans, M Fairley,
M Fletcher, T Gray, P Grogan, C Hannaway,
N Hargreaves, I Hart, J Hart, B Hunt, G Jeffery, C Jones,
J Joy, S Kay, K King, J Lavan, T Learoyd, S Martin,
C Massey, J McCue, P McInnes, C Morgan, L Myer,
G Nightingale, M O'Donoghue, M Ovens, L Pallister,
D Powlay, C Pugh, C Quartermain, C Richardson,
V Rider, L Rynn, P Salvin, Stuart Smith, B Suthers,
J Symon, D Taylor, J Thompson, P Thomson and
L White.

OFFICIALS E Dale, A Pearson, B Archer, K Boulton, S Newton,
P Rice, J Sampson, C Styles and P Winstanley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors
N Bendelow, R Clark, C Curr, J Neal and A Oliver.

57 **To receive Declarations of Interest.**

Councillor Joy declared an interest in all matters relating to Guisborough Eco Group as a member of Guisborough Eco Group.

Councillor Rider declared an interest in all matters relating to Saltburn, Marske and New Marske Parish Council as a member of the Parish Council.

Councillor Smith declared an interest in all matters relating to Saltburn, Marske and New Marske Parish Council as a member of the Parish Council.

58 **To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2023.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the following corrections:-

Question 5 was a question from Councillor Thomson and not Councillor Thompson.

Question 2 the answer from Councillor Quartermain fourth paragraph to

read abstraction not obstruction.

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

RESOLVED that the attendance matrix be noted.

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

The Mayor thanked those Councillors who had made a nomination for this year's Mayor's Community Achievement Awards, the Awards would take place on Wednesday, 27th March in the Council Chamber.

The Mayor also advised that his Charity Ball would take place on Saturday, 27th April at Gisborough Hall. All proceeds would be going to Footprints in the Community, who provided foodbanks and a variety of services to help with isolation and poverty and The Junction Foundation which supported Children and Young Families. He hoped that Members would be able to attend to support these worthy causes or donate a prize for the raffle.

Leader's Announcements.

Since we last met, we have announced details of two great events for the public.

Elite-level cyclists will return to our borough for the East Cleveland Classic in April. We will host both the men's and women's races, which will start and finish in Saltburn and go through East Cleveland.

Previous cycling events have been really popular with the public and I'm sure people will turn out once again to watch the riders as they pass through where they live.

In May, a new kite festival will be held on Redcar seafront.

The festival will feature spectacular displays by kite experts and the opportunity for members of the public to learn the skills of flying a kite.

There will also be food and entertainment to make it a great day out for the family.

With the return of music on the beach at Majuba, it is shaping up to a good year for events.

Residents will have the opportunity to take up food and drink offers during this year's Taste of Redcar and Cleveland promotion.

The promotion provides special offers for families to enjoy quality food and drink at any one of 32 businesses which have signed up to take part. It runs until March 10 and I'm sure it will be as popular as it has

been in previous years.

Our public park tennis courts will be refurbished after we secured more than £170,000 of funding from the Lawn Tennis Association

We would like all our residents to have the opportunity to be active and this investment means they will have quality facilities to try their hand at tennis.

Our staff will be working hard to restore the Saltburn Cliff Tramway to working order.

Members will be aware of the fire last month which badly damaged the tramway. We've now had the opportunity to assess the damage, which is as serious as we feared.

It will be an extensive job to restore the tramway and it is too early to say when it will re-open, but we will aim to have it working again as soon as possible.

Finally, I would like to praise our staff who have, once again, taken decisive action to keep the public safe.

Our colleagues in Trading Standards investigated the sale of illegal cigarettes, tobacco and vapes and this led to two businesses being closed down.

A great deal of work goes into these investigations and then working closely with our legal team to bring the cases to court.

It is another great result and a clear message to the small minority of business which break the law.

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

The Managing Director reminded Members that there would be a recorded vote in relation to the Budget Proposals

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

No questions from the public had been received.

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

Budget Proposals – 2024/25.

The Council considered and received a report presented by Councillor

Massey and duly seconded by Councillor Brown that set out Cabinet's budget proposals for the forthcoming 2024/25 financial year along with an indicative medium term financial plan through to 2028/29, for the Borough Council to then consider for formal approval.

In addition to this report, a supplement was circulated which advised that the original report estimated government funding levels based on the provisional Local Government finance settlement which was published on 18 December 2023.

Subsequently, on the 24 January 2024, Government announced £600m additional funding for Local Authorities, in addition to that provided in the provisional Local Government finance settlement. The main element of the additional funding was £500m allocated in the Social Care Grant, to support authorities with social care responsibilities. Other elements included an additional £15m for the Rural Services Delivery Grant and an increase in the funding guarantee so that all Local Authorities would see a minimum 4% in their Core Spending Power, before taking any local decisions on raising Council Tax.

Cabinet were advised that Individual Local Authority allocations of this additional funding would not be confirmed until the final local government finance settlement was published in early February 2024. However, it was estimated that this Council's share of the additional funding could be c£1.5m.

The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) reminded Cabinet that although the funding was welcomed it did not resolve the ongoing financial challenges facing the Council or change the nature of the 2024/25 Budget report and the Chief Finance Officer's assurances within it. The additional funding was assumed to be one-off for 2024/25, and whilst reduced, there remained a c£0.7m budget gap for 2024/25 based on current proposals.

Cabinet were also advised that further savings and solutions would still need to be identified subsequent to the approval of the 2024/25 Budget Proposals.

The motion was put to a recorded vote whereupon the voting was as follows:-

FOR: Councillors Attwood, Belshaw, Brook, Brown, Cawley, Chaney, Clarke, Craven, Davies, Earl, Evans, Fairley, Hannaway, I Hart, Head, G Jeffery, Jones, Joy, Kay, King, Lavan, Massey, McCue, Morgan, Myer, Nightingale, O'Donoghue, Ovens, Pallister, Quartermain, Richardson, Rynn, Smith, Suthers, Taylor, Thompson and White.

AGAINST: Councillors Berry, Cutler, Fletcher, Gray, Grogan, Hargreaves, J Hart, Hunt, Martin, McInnes, Powlay, Pugh, Rider, Salvin, Symon and Thomson.

ABSTENTION: Councillor Learoyd.

RESOLVED that : -

1. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which sets a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year and an indicative medium-term position through to 2028/29, consisting of the following main components be approved, including an amendment to government funding levels once confirmed in the final local government financial settlement, and a corresponding adjustment to the level of reserves:
 - A Medium-Term Financial Strategy, incorporating the Driving Change efficiencies programme (as set out in Appendix 3 and not reproduced), and including:
 - A 2.99% council tax increase for 2024/25 (as set out in Appendix 6 and not reproduced).
 - A 2.00% adult social care precept increase for 2024/25 (as set out in Appendix 6 and not reproduced).
 - A proposal to implement from 01 April 2025 additional premiums for council tax on long-term empty properties and periodically occupied dwellings as set out in the report.
 - For Business Rates
 - the National Non-Domestic Rates Return (NNDR1) 2024/25 (£41.165million) as the business rates base position for the Borough, with the Council's share of £20.711 million factored into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in Appendix 8b not reproduced).
 - the forecast surplus position on the Collection Fund for 2023/24 of £0.124
 - million. The Council's proportionate share is £0.061 million (as set out in Appendix 8c not reproduced).
 - The setting of a General Reserve position of £6.626 million (as set out in Appendix 4 not reproduced)
 - The required council tax amounts and revenue allocations, applicable for Redcar & Cleveland Council (as set out in Appendix 6 not reproduced).
 - An affordable medium term Capital Investment Programme, including a revised 2023/24 position (as set out in Appendix 9 not reproduced)).
 - A Treasury Management Strategy that sets the authorised limit for external debt for 2024/25 at £299.575 million (as set out in Appendix 10 not reproduced)), as supported by the Governance Committee.
 - A revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2023/24 and the policy for 2024/25 (as set out in Appendix 10 not reproduced)), as supported by the Governance Committee.
 - A Policy for flexible use of capital receipts for 2024/25 (as set out in Appendix 11 not reproduced).

Pay Policy Statement 2024/25.

The Council considered and received a report presented by Councillor Massey and duly seconded by Councillor Brown that sought approval for a revised Pay Policy Statement for the year 2024/25 to ensure the Council's compliance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. This legislation requires Local Authorities to prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement for publication which sets out their policies on:

- the remuneration of its senior executives;
- the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees; and
- the relationship between:
 - (i) the remuneration of its senior executives, and ,
 - (ii) the remuneration of the remainder of the workforce.

The report also sought agreement for an uplift to the Council's Redcar and Cleveland Minimum Wage Supplement, and included a report on the current position in terms of the Council's gender pay gap.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 be approved for publication;
2. An uplift of the Redcar and Cleveland Minimum Wage Supplement from £10.90 to £12.00 per hour with effect from 1 April 2024 be approved;
3. The position in terms of the pay multiple and the current situation regarding and unchanged gender pay gap in favour of female staff be noted; and,
4. It be noted that as the gender pay gap calculations are complex and may require minor adjustment/refinement at a later stage, in which case an update will be published.

Members' Allowance Scheme 2024/26.

The Council considered and received a report presented by Councillor Massey and duly seconded by Councillor Brown that set out details of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme following its most recent review.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Thomson and duly seconded by Councillor Hannaway that given that the review process conducted by the Independent Review Panel (IRP) supports the principles of 'managing public money well' and 'keeping the Council financially stable' and 'allows the Council to be transparent' and invites 'Members' own proposals', 'subject to reasonableness', it is proposed that the IRP recommendations be amended to include 'That all Elected Members granted a Parking Permit should be expected to pay the appropriate cost of the permit'.

It was noted that this was already provided for in the scheme and with the agreement of the meeting the amendment was withdrawn.

RESOLVED that the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations be approved namely:

In respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme, Borough Council is recommended to approve the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations, namely:

(1) Further qualifying criteria be applied to the Group Leaders' Special Responsibility Allowance, namely that:

- The threshold for the size of group in order for the Group Leader to qualify for a Group Leader Special Responsibility Allowance should increase from five to ten.
- The Leader of the ruling group would claim the Council Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance and there would be no further Group Leader allowance available to a member of that group.
- The number of Group Leader Allowances (in addition to the Leader's Allowance) be limited three.

(2) All other elements of the scheme remain unchanged.

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 Resource Service.

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

64 **To receive Reports from Portfolio Holders.**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Adults.

Councillor Belshaw presented a report which gave an update on her portfolio and answered Member's questions in relation to it :- **NOTED.**

65 **To consider Reports.**

Members were requested to endorse the proposed changes to the distribution of seats on Committees and Boards as a result of recent changes in political proportionality.

RESOLVED that the proposed distribution of seats to the different Political Groups as set out in the report be agreed.

At this point in the meeting it was agreed that Standing Orders be

suspended to allow the meeting to proceed beyond three hours.

66 **To consider Motions.**

MOVED by Councillor Salvin and duly seconded by Councillor Hargreaves that this Council:

- supports the return of steel production to Teesside;
- Notes that the 16-week determination period for this application is a maximum and not a minimum time period for an application to be heard;
- Notes that at the time of submitting this motion there had been **NO OBJECTIONS** to planning application (R/2023/0793/ESM);
- Notes that there are no legal reasons why this application cannot be considered at the planning meeting on 7th March;
- Notes that should the application be delayed; it may risk hundreds of new steel production jobs and the return of steel production to Teesside; and
- Resolves that planning application R/2023/0793/ESM be added to the agenda for consideration by Regulatory Committee on 7th March 2024.

RESOLVED that on the successful motion of Councillor Salvin and duly seconded by Councillor Hargreaves that this Council:

- supports the return of Steel production to Teesside;
- Notes that the 16-week determination period for this application is a maximum and not a minimum time period for an application to be heard;
- Notes that at the time of submitting this motion there had been **NO OBJECTIONS** to planning application (R/2023/0793/ESM);
- Notes that there are no legal reasons why this application cannot be considered at the planning meeting on 7th March;
- Notes that should the application be delayed; it may risk hundreds of new steel production jobs and the return of steel production to Teesside; and
- Resolves that planning application R/2023/0793/ESM be added to the agenda for consideration by Regulatory Committee on 7th March 2024.

67 **To appoint Members.**

RESOLVED:-

1. That the changes to committee membership outlined at 1 to 3 below be approved;
2. That the changes outlined at 4-10 below be advised.
3. That Councillor Alec Brown replaces Councillor Jade Lavan on Sir

Williams Turners Hospital.

Climate and Environment Scrutiny & Improvement Committee

1. Councillor Barry Hunt to remain on Committee as Independent Group representative.

Regulatory Committee

2. Councillor Martin Fletcher to remain on the Committee as Independent Group representative.

Corporate Parenting Board

3. Councillor Lisa Belshaw to fill the vacancy on Corporate Parenting Board

Growth Scrutiny & Improvement Committee

4. Labour Group Councillor (tbc) to fill vacancy

Corporate Resources Scrutiny & Improvement Committee

5. Labour Group Councillor (tbc) to fill vacancy

Adults, Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny & Improvement Committee

6. Independent Group Councillor (tbc) to replace Councillor Graham Cutler

Governance Committee

7. Independent Group Councillor (tbc) to fill the vacancy on Governance Committee

Employment, Health and Safety Committee

8. Independent Group Councillor (tbc) to fill the vacancy on Employment, Health and Safety Committee

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny

9. Independent Group Councillor (tbc) to fill the vacancy on Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

10. Independent Group Councillor (tbc) to replace Councillor Martin Fletcher

68

To reply to Questions from Members of the Council.

The Mayor announced that due to the lack of time Councillors Ovens, Joy, and Thomson would be given a written response to their questions.

Q3. Question from Councillor Learoyd to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council

“Will the Leader and Cabinet please sign a letter to Historic England calling on all relevant finds at the South of Marske to be scheduled and protected, so that future generations can learn about North East

Yorkshire's until now largely forgotten past?"

The Leader replied as follows:-

"Historic England will be the decision maker on whether any areas on the Land South of Marske will be Scheduled due to their archaeological merit. This will depend on what is actually found on the site as the archaeology is assessed over the coming weeks/months. The Council does not have any role in this decision making process so will rightly reserve the decision for Historic England to make. Bearing this in mind, Elected Members will consider the content of any letter presented and after due consideration, decide to sign at the appropriate time."

Supplementary Question by Councillor Learoyd:

"The areas planned for the site and development were outside the Limits to Development of Marske-by-the-Sea being over the railway line and as recommended in all the Local Plans in the past. Will the Cabinet please consider calling the area which is south of the railway line not Marske-by-the-Sea but South of Marske?"

The Leader replied as follows:-

"I called it South of Marske in the answer to your original question."

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

Council

ATTENDANCE RECORD - 2023/24

Surname	First name	AGM 25.05.23	27.07.23	28.09.23	09.11.23	21.12.23	29.02.24							Total Meetings Attended / total possible
Attwood	Izzy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Belshaw	Lisa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Bendelow	Neil	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓	Apols							/11
Berry	Peter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Brook	Adam	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓							/11
Brown	Alec	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓							/11
Cawley	Ceri	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Chaney	Peter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Clark	Rob	✓	Apols	✓	Apols	Apols	Apols							/11
Clarke	Bill	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Craven	Janine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Curr	Carolyn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols							/11
Cutler	Graham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Davies	Wayne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Earl	Ursula	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Evans	Kendra	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Fairley	Marian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Fletcher	Martin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Gray	Tim	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓							/11
Grogan	Peter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Hannaway	Craig	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Hargreaves	Niall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Hart	Julie	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓							/11

Hart	Ian	Apols	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Head	Malcolm	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓							/11
Hunt	Barry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Jeffery	Graham	✓	✓	Apols	✓	Apols	✓							/11
Jones	Chris	✓	✓	Apols	✓	Apols	✓							/11
Joy	Jemma	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Kay	Steve	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
King	Karen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Lavan	Jade	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Learoyd	Tristian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Martin	Stephen	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓							/11
Massey	Chris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
McCue	John	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
McInnes	Paul	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Morgan	Carole	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓							/11
Myer	Luke	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Neal	Jonathan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols							/11
Nightingale	Glyn	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓							/11
O Donoghue	Margaret	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓							/11
Oliver	Andrew	Apols	Apols	✓	✓	Apols	Apols							/11
Ovens	Mary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Pallister	Lynn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Powlay	Deborah	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Pugh	Curt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Quartermain	Carl	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓							/11
Richardson	Carrie	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓							
Rider	Vera	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							/11
Rynn	Lynne	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓							/11

Salvin	Paul	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								/11
Smith	Stuart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								/11
Suthers	William	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								/11
Symon	Jack	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								/11
Taylor	David	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓								/11
Thompson	Justin	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓	✓								/11
Thomson	Phillip	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓	✓								/11
White	Linda	✓	✓	✓	Apols	✓	✓								/11
															/11

Key	
✓	Attended
RA	Apologies Submitted (replacement attended)
Apols	Apologies Submitted (no replacement)
X	Did Not Attend (no apologies received)
C	Cancelled Meeting
n/a	Not a Member

Reason for Absence (NB Full details may not be provided for reasons of confidentiality)	
1	Personal Commitment
2	Work Commitment
3	Illness/Medical
4	Conflicting Council Commitment
5	Other
6	Civic Duties

**CORPORATE RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Cabinet Minute Number:- 37

**Report Title:- Loftus Conservation Area Management Plan
Supplementary Planning Document**

The Council is asked to agree the following Cabinet recommendation in relation to the report that was considered by Cabinet on 6 February 2024.

Minute Details: -

The Loftus Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been prepared in order to outline how the Council would seek to preserve and enhance the Loftus Conservation Area.

The draft Loftus CAMP was published for a period of public consultation on 13 February 2023 and this report outlined the results of that publicity and sought the endorsement of Cabinet for the adoption of the Loftus CAMP as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Recommendation from Cabinet

RESOLVED that Cabinet endorse the Loftus Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document **for adoption by the Borough Council**, following public consultation on the Draft Management Plan, held between 13 February 2023 and 27 March 2023.



Member Report

Resources – Portfolio Update

Report to: Borough Council
Report from: Cabinet Member for Resources
Portfolio: Resources
Report Date: 11 April 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. When I was appointed as the Cabinet Member for Resources last May, it was very evident that the key task for me would be to pick up where my predecessor left off in trying to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council.
- 1.2. As members are very aware, local authority finances are stretched, with factors such as inflation as well as the increased demand and costs of delivering vital services impacting councils across the country. This has seen some local authorities effectively go bankrupt, being unable to provide services within their budget. In the last six years, eight local authorities have issued a section 114 notice, notifying government of severe financial distress, compared with zero authorities declaring such a notice between 2001 and 2018.
- 1.3. Thankfully we are not in that position, but it was very apparent upon taking up my role that without decisive action that could be the case in the future. The Local Government Information Unit have stated that, without reform to local government funding, there is a risk that up to half the Councils in England will go bankrupt in the lifetime of the next parliament.
- 1.4. To tackle our financial issues at Redcar and Cleveland, this administration has sought the views of all councillors and members of staff. As members will recall over the summer months, we held several cross-party budget and transformation workshops, as well as two all-member conferences, where we worked as a team to identify solutions for balancing the budget.
- 1.5. Such is the position that local authorities are in, with resources having reduced for more than a decade, there were no easy options for balancing the budget. In effect, our options were reducing and streamlining service delivery or generating additional income. In reality, our challenge was so great that the Council has needed to use both options. I thank members for positively engaging in the budget setting process through the conferences and workshops referenced above, however as we have a legal responsibility to balance the budget, we had to take some difficult decisions.
- 1.6. Consequently, the February Borough Council meeting approved a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year. This included £16.4m of service investments and £7.6m of budget savings over the next year, alongside

increasing our taxation and fees and charges income.

- 1.7. We hope that taking these tough decisions will pay dividends and place the council on a sound financial footing, however without assurance over a longer-term funding settlement from government, and the unrelenting trajectory of spend in statutory services it would be unrealistic to suggest that we will not have further difficult decisions over the coming years.
- 1.8. A Local Government Information Unit [survey](#) in February 2024 showed that over 92% of councils reported financial issues due to inflation and the cost of living crisis, and that, consequently, 91% of councils, were planning to raise their Council Tax. In addition, a [Local Government Association survey](#) of member councils in the same month, showcased that 85% of councils – and 99% of single-tier or county councils - would need to make cost savings, even after additional government funding was granted in January 2024.
- 1.9. A House of Commons Committee Report on [Financial Distress in Local Authorities](#) published in January 2024 predicted local authorities face a £4 billion funding gap over the next two years, echoing a previous calculation [by the LGA](#) in December 2023.
- 1.10. The Council and the Resources portfolio must continue to tackle these national challenges and ensure that our 2024/25 budget is implemented in full, whilst continuing to explore further possibilities for cost reduction and income generation in very difficult times for local government.
- 1.11. Whilst, as you would expect, much of my time is dominated by such efforts and the budget as a whole, there is lots of other good work, that often goes unseen, within my portfolio area. Through this report I would like to share some details of the work within my portfolio area, highlighting some of the work we have been doing, as well as some of the things we'll be looking at in the future.
- 1.12. By way of reminder my portfolio incorporates the work of several interdependent teams, including Financial Services, Legal Services, Human Resources, Governance, Information Technology, Business Support, Communications and Strategic Policy. Much of the work highlighted is very much a product of the whole team.

2.0 The Corporate Plan

- 2.1 At the Borough Council meeting in December a new Corporate Plan was agreed for the council. This plan sets out our priorities for both the council and the local area. The priorities cut across all council services, striving to give young people the best start in life, supporting residents to live healthy lives and age well. This is alongside prioritising making the borough a great place to live through supporting job creation, as well as doing our best to look after the environment now and in the future.
- 2.2 Whilst, given the financial climate facing the council, it may not be possible to deliver positive change at the pace or extent that we would like, we still need to be clear about what is most important, so we can direct resources accordingly.

To take forward the priorities, a number of key strategies have been, or will be, developed to set out exactly what we will do. These will be supported by a range of actions and performance measures, with progress reported to elected members. This will enable colleagues both in the Chamber and at Committee meetings to drive improvement and ensure accountability.

2.3 Whilst the work of my portfolio cuts across all council priorities, my key emphasis will be on the priority to ensure that the organisation is strong and sustainable. The management of the budget, legal and democratic compliance, and workforce are all key to this. My portfolio will however also oversee an exciting piece of work that has been initiated to develop a new Volunteering Strategy. This strategy, which members are helping to shape through a task and finish group, will be key in shaping the council's volunteering offer and encouraging community participation.

3.0 Workforce

3.1 In December Cabinet approved a new Workforce Strategy. This document sets the strategic direction for the management of the workforce between 2023 and 2027. The priorities included within the document are set out below. Whilst this section of this report is very much a backward look, it will be the priorities which form the basis of future updates.

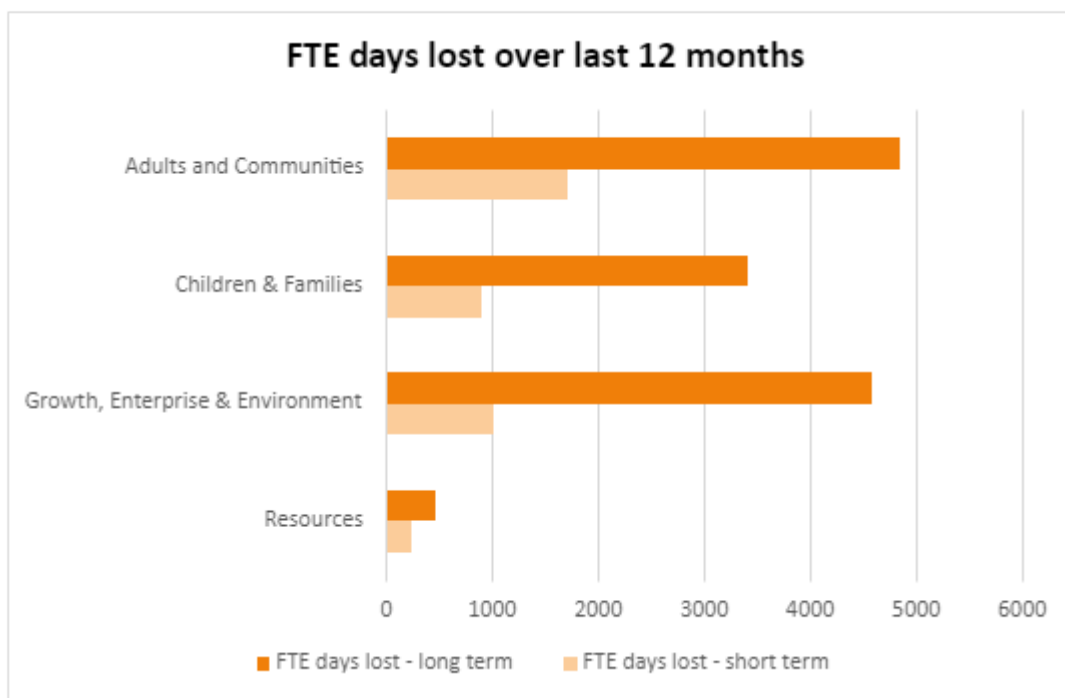
- Delivering our future
- Building leadership capacity
- Developing our workforce
- Being a great employer
- Supporting our young people and bringing in new talent
- Inclusive workforce – ensure everyone has a voice.

3.2 One of the most positive areas of my portfolio is the work we do to support young people into good, well-paid jobs. The council's apprenticeship scheme very much does this, helping to bring young people with fresh ideas and energy into the organisation. The Apprenticeship Levy also provides opportunities for existing staff to access high-quality training to aid their career development. The council secured a Princess Royal Training Award in December 2023 in recognition of the excellent work that is being done.

3.3 For the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 the organisation set itself a target of initiating 54 apprenticeships. I am happy to report that we achieved this target with 32 new apprentices starting in the organisation, as well as 22 existing members of staff starting an apprenticeship, utilising the funding from the Apprenticeship Levy. The Levy requires all organisations with a payroll over £3 million to pay 0.5% through PAYE. The money can then be drawn down from government to invest in apprenticeships and higher-level apprenticeships for staff. The council spent the full allocation available through the Apprenticeship Levy last year, which is not the case for all local authorities.

3.4 At the January Borough Council meeting colleagues in the Chamber sought details of the organisation's sickness absence rate. Further information is provided below.

3.5 For the rolling year 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024, the organisation lost an average of 9.48 days per full-time equivalent member of staff which equates to 17,639 days lost. The following graph breaks this absence down by short-term and long-term across directorates.



3.7 Although sickness absence is higher within the Council post Covid, at the end of the 2022/2023 financial year we were the best performing Council in the Tees Valley when it comes to sickness absence. With respect to 2023/24, the half-year position April to September indicated that we were comparable to Hartlepool and Darlington but have had slightly less sickness absence than Stockton. The break down of the half-year position is as is set out in the following table (The full-year figures are due to be available in the coming weeks).

Tees Valley Council	Half year Outturn 2023/24	Half year Outturn 2022-23
Darlington	4.34	4.87
Hartlepool	4.36	5.21
Middlesborough	Not provided	
Redcar & Cleveland	4.38	4.44
Stockton	4.9	4.9

3.8 Some of the measures to support staff in the workplace include occupational health to manage health related issues and ensure staff are physically fit for their role. In addition, the organisation utilises a counselling service for staff as well as physio. Upon staff returning from sickness managers are mandated to do a return-to-work interview and a sickness absence review if necessary. Through these meetings, the individual needs of staff are considered and actioned as appropriate.

- 3.9 As set out in the Organisational Plan agreed at Cabinet in March, further detailed information on sickness absence is to be reported through the Employment Health and Safety Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 3.10 As members will be aware recruiting and retaining staff is a challenge across the local government sector. The organisation has undertaken several pieces of work in recent months to aid recruitment. This includes the digitalisation of the recruitment process through the North East Jobs platform, which has improved the speed and efficiency of getting to the recruitment market. In addition, a bespoke jobs and recruitment microsite launches this month for jobs at the council. This will be underpinned by improved internal processes which ensure jobs are posted at the same time each week.
- 3.11 The council along with the other northeast local authorities have worked with the LGA to pilot a national recruitment campaign. The early feedback has shown that this campaign has significantly increased the number of 'hits' on the North East Jobs platform, with all authorities seeing an increase in completed applications. The LGA will be presenting feedback on the campaign to national government, after which it is hoped that a national recruitment campaign will be launched for local government.
- 3.12 To ensure safety in the workplace the organisation has a range of systems and processes in place. Accident data shows that from 1 April 2023 there were a total of 87 incidents reported. These consisted of 80 minor accidents, one major and six +7day reportable incidents. Of the six 7+ day reportable, one related to manual handling, three slips, trips, falls, one hit by a vehicle moving forwards, one hit by an object when using machinery. The one major accident was caused by a slip, trip or fall. Absences for more than seven consecutive days due to an accident are required to be reported separately under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). During the 2022/23 year, there were 78 incidents, they consisted of 66 minor, four major and eight +7day incidents. Although overall we have seen an increase in incidents, we have seen a decrease in both major incidents and +7day absence incidents.
- 3.13 In order to deliver upon the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy key work has been undertaken to launch a mandatory e-learning module which over 1,000 staff have undertaken. This module is available to members through the organisation's e-learning system, should colleagues wish to access it. As well as this, legislation requires that the authority produces annual gender pay gap and workforce profile reports. Whilst these are available on the council [website](#), key points of note are that the authority has a 9.7% pay gap in favour of women. The gender pay gap is not to be confused with equal pay, men and women doing the same job are paid the same. From a workforce profile perspective, the key point of note is that over 30% of the council's workforce is over 55 years of age.

4.0 Governance, Registration and Legal

- 4.1 Whilst the local elections last May seem like a bit of a distant memory with so much work having taken place since, they were undertaken in between this

report and that of my predecessor in February 2023. The management of the elections is a significant task, with lots of work going on behind the scenes before the public facing election day and count to ensure that they run smoothly and are compliant with legislation. With mayoral, Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May and a general election to be held no later than 28 January 2025, the next municipal year will be another busy year for the team. It is also important to recognise all the work that was done to enable us elected members to hit the ground running, from the comprehensive induction through the practical things like getting our IT kit and passes sorted.

- 4.2 The Elections Act 2022 introduced several new provisions. Some of these provisions were introduced ahead local elections in May 2023, including Voter ID and accessibility requirements at polling stations. Residents without Voter ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. At present around 93% of eligible voters are registered to do so. To date 486 Voter Authority Certificates have been issued. Other measures are being rolled out over the next year, including changes in absent vote application processes and time limits, new rules about postal vote handing, proxy voting limits, overseas voters and EU citizens' rights.
- 4.3 In the first ten months following the local elections 2,939 queries were received through the member enquiry system. When the enquiry system was initially introduced it was on the back of some concern being expressed by elected members that their enquiries were not being captured and actioned. Whilst there is still some work to do to ensure that all requests are fully dealt with, the system is a real step forward in the coordination of requests from colleagues. The constructive feedback provided by members is very much appreciated and useful in helping us to continually improve the service. Whilst answering and resolving the queries which come in is a whole team effort, the work by the small team who process so many requests, acting as a conduit between members and services is invaluable. For illustrative purposes in addition to the member enquiries, 1,159 Freedom of Information requests and 130 corporate complaints were received by the same team between April 1 2023 and 31 March 2024 all of which require a considered response.
- 4.4 As I highlighted at the start of this report, much of the work undertaken within my portfolio goes unseen and at times goes unnoticed until something does not work. For example, much work goes into ensuring the smooth operation of the decision-making processes of the council. Since the elections last year, there have been 95 formal council committees, which were all legally compliant. In addition to this the team supports the Police and Crime Panel. Work has also been undertaken to improve the accessibility to decision making through the continued development of the ModernGov system on the council's website.
- 4.5 A slight cause for concern is the number of elected member code of conduct complaints. There have been 31 (18 Borough, 13 Parish) since the elections in May 2023, compared to 83 between 2019 and 2023. There are a number of factors giving rise to this position but the increasing use of social media is generally viewed as a key factor in the rise in complaints. Whilst code of conduct issues of course must be managed professionally and in accordance with required procedures, the process takes time and resource to manage.
- 4.6 In 2023 government consulted on a new code for the management of

complaints. In line with the new code, a new Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure has been developed and will be reported to Governance Committee in the coming weeks. The key changes in the procedure relate to the timescales for responding to complaints, moving to a two-stage process as well as the requirement for an annual complaints and improvement report, reflecting on changes and lessons learned from complaints.

- 4.7 An area that perhaps members may not know sits within the Resources portfolio is the Registration Service. This team works hard to ensure legal compliance with civil registration legislation. They provide a statutory public facing service, working with residents and stakeholders locally and in the wider community, in some of the best, but also most sensitive and challenging times. The service has been under real pressure in recent times, like most registration services across the country, with increasing service demands across all aspects of registration provided by the small team, including the registration of births, deaths, marriages and citizenships.
- 4.8 During 2023-24, the service accepted of 943 notices (930 of marriage and 13 notice of civil partnership) facilitating marriage and civil partnership ceremonies across the Borough and elsewhere; solemnised 382 marriage ceremonies and performed 2 civil partnership ceremonies within the Redcar and Cleveland Borough. The ceremony demand continues to be strong in the Borough, in part as a result of a long period of restrictions associated with the pandemic, but also due to the number of attractive venues across Redcar and Cleveland.
- 4.9 The team has worked closely with colleagues in Children's Services to pilot birth registration/declaration appointments in some of our family hubs, a service offering which has been widely welcomed by residents providing them with the option to complete the registration closer to home rather than travel to the Register Office.
- 4.10 The coming year will see some changes with death certificate reform and the imminent implementation of the Medical Examiner, who is an NHS employee, as a statutory function supporting longer term plans to move towards the digitisation of the Registration Service. This will see all deaths scrutinised by the Medical Examiner who will then electronically transfer the medical certificate to the registrars, or, if required, make a referral to the coroner, removing the need for family members to collect and transfer documentation themselves. The five day key performance target time frame for registering deaths will run from the point of receipt of the medical certificate by the registrars rather than the date of death, which will likely have a positive impact on performance against the target by removing the impact of delays in the issue of the medical certificate. Other than the introduction of the Marriage Schedule System in 2021, this is one of the biggest changes to this statutory and legal function in hundreds of years.
- 4.11 In 2023 the value of regeneration and growth projects spend in Redcar and Cleveland was £26.6 million. This money came from several sources, to fund a variety of different initiatives, with each project requiring a range of contractors to deliver upon various stages of work. The Procurement and Legal teams do a lot of work to support these projects, ensuring legal compliance when appointing contractors. The team actively champion buying local, ensuring the money goes into the pockets of local suppliers. In total, which takes account of all council

services, £61.5 million was spent in the borough in 2023.

- 4.12 The Legal team also plays a key role in helping to keep our communities safe. In the period since the local elections there have been eleven successful Closure Orders. These have been a mixture of residential closures and also some Trading Standards closures. This is alongside the work done for prosecutions relating to unacceptable behaviour. The team also does a lot of work to support processes such as planning, conveyance and contract law.
- 4.13 As colleagues will be aware, recent times, especially the COVID pandemic, have strengthened the case for having robust business continuity arrangements in place, so when something unexpected occurs, the council can continue to provide services. Over the last year the team has done some good work to further strengthen arrangements including stress testing business continuity plans in critical services through planned exercises which consider a wide range of scenarios, introducing business continuity training for new managers as well as reviewing business continuity plans across the organisation to ensure that they are robust. This, of course, is in addition to risk management whereby work is done to pre-empt and mitigate risk to avoid the potential for something going wrong. Our risk management arrangements were recently audited by Veritau who gave “substantial assurance”.

5.0 Financial Services, IT and Communication

- 5.1 As the council’s budget underpins all that the organisation does, influencing the shape and level of services which are provided to residents, it has a very high profile. It is however sometimes the case that the work undertaken to manage the budget has less prominence. A great deal of work has been done by the finance team to mitigate in-year financial pressures, managing spend control measures, processing payments and overseeing the development of the council’s accounts.
- 5.2 A key team within Financial Services is the Local Taxation and Support team. As well as having the important role of overseeing work with respect to council tax and business rates, a lot of work is and will continue to help people in need of financial support. In 2023, 1,329 residents received financial support through the team. Much of this was through the Household Support Fund which provided two payments per year for families in receipt of council tax support. This Fund has been extended by the government from April 2024 until the end of September 2024, but no future schemes after this date have yet been announced.
- 5.3 The council’s Digital Strategy sets out the organisation’s approach to the digitalisation of services, improving efficiency and accessibility. Since the last portfolio report for Resources key work has been taken forward to further digitalise services. A good example of this is the development of the online portal for accessing council services. There are now 81 services available and being accessed through the portal, with over 21,500 accounts. Positive steps have also been undertaken in the development of the organisation’s online presence with 2.3 million unique page views to the council’s website in 2023.
- 5.4 Such is the nature of IT that when it is working well, we can take for granted all the work that goes on behind the scenes to enable us to do our jobs as well as

help to connect residents with our services. It is sometimes when things go wrong that we become more aware and need professional support, each month the IT service desk receives in the region of 1,200 calls, as well as in the region of 1,500 tickets raised through self-service with people needing help with their IT. Around of 90% of these requests are dealt with in the month they are opened.

- 5.5 Over the last year the team has undertaken important work to improve our IT infrastructure, as well as further enhance the security of the network. Improvement works have included integrating telephones into Teams, removing the need for phones in buildings, consolidating services on more efficient hardware saving energy and costs as well as investing in Microsoft Sentinel to improve security.
- 5.6 Keeping in touch and engaging with our residents and service users is a key priority for the council. The Communications Team has worked hard to ensure that residents are kept up to date with all that the authority does, utilising different platforms and mixed methods such as live videos. This work has seen the council's Facebook audience grow by over 2,000 to 23,500. A single Facebook post this year reached over 98,000 accounts with over 38,000 engagements. This social media is in addition to core media relations and marketing work as well as the production of the council magazine. The team has also launched a residents' newsletter which is issued monthly. The Communications Team has also been central in developing microsites for recruitment and volunteering and developing a new Public Information Network site for social care.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 As indicated at the beginning of this report, it has been a challenging start to my role in this important portfolio. We have however taken steps to seek ensure that the organisation is strong and sustainable in the short term. Longer term sustainability will require a reduction in costs for statutory services, a continued reduction in the rate of inflation and greater certainty over future funding settlements. Whilst there is room for some optimism with significant economic development work going on in the borough, which has the potential to generate additional business rates, further difficult decisions may be required until any benefits of this potential economic growth are fully realised.
- 6.2 Finally, I would also like to thank the various teams within my portfolio for the work they do to keep the council running. As I indicated previously this work is often unseen, but it is vital and enables front line colleagues to get on and deliver services. I commend this report to Borough Council.