

# **Billingham Town Council Minutes of Town Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
6.30 pm,  
Council Chamber, Billingham**

- Present:** **Councillor Colin Pollard (Chairman)**  
Councillors; Helen Atkinson, Alan Gallimore, Ray McCall, Ann McCoy, Jane Metcalfe, Olive Milner, Eleanor Mockler, Sharon Scott, Michael Smith & Mick Stoker
- Apologies:** Apologies were received from Councillors: James Dickinson, Jean O'Donnell, Sue Skilbeck (Chairman) & Paul Smith
- Official:** Dianne Rickaby – Executive Officer
- In Attendance:**
- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Richard McGuckin | Built and Natural Environment<br>Manager -Stockton Borough<br>Council |
| Chris Rennahan   | Stockton Borough Council  |
| Ian Hayton       | Chief Fire Officer – Cleveland<br>Fire Brigade                        |
| Phil Lancaster   | Director of Community<br>Protection – Cleveland Fire<br>Brigade       |
| Tracey Bell      | Policy & Performance Officer<br>Cleveland Fire Brigade                |
| Mike Bowron      | Regeneration Officer –<br>Stockton Borough Council                    |
| Mike Womphrey    | Stockton Borough Council  |
| Kevin Bowler     | North Billingham Residents<br>Association                             |

## **365/09 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

## **366/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were submitted from Councillors: James Dickinson, Jean O'Donnell, Sue Skilbeck & Paul Smith

**367/09 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interests.

No declarations were made.

**368/09 RICHARD McGUCKIN, Built and Natural Environment Manager,  
STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL – Billingham Transport  
Links/Strategy**

Richard & Chris were in attendance at the meeting to give members an update on transport within the Tees Valley. Richard advised members that Stockton is set to benefit from approximately £62 million of investment in the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements after Government gave its initial go-ahead for a massive improvement project. The scheme will see major changes in bus services across the area and provide a network of high quality, high frequency, reliable bus services, focused on the main town centres across the region. Roads earmarked for improvement in Billingham include Windlestone Road, converting grass verges to parking areas to allow off road parking creating easier access for buses. Low Grange Avenue converting grass verges to parking areas at “pinch points” and improvements to the junction at Neasham Avenue. Billingham Town Centre buses to be segregated from all other traffic on The Causeway. Also bus stops to be improved in quality and focussed on the town centre side of the Road.

Following the initial go-ahead from the Government, local consultation on the proposals, will begin over the autumn. Once the project receives final approval, work will start early next year for completion in 2012.

Richard informed members of the Tees Valley Metro project looking at transport across the North East. The area will benefit from around £35 million of investment in the first phase of the project, designed to link the main centres together using the existing rail network. Richard stated that the Interim Regional Transport Board, which advises the Government on funding for transport approved a £30 million contribution to provide a range of improvements in the short term including:

- New platforms at Darlington and Middlesbrough stations
- Relocation of the existing Durham Tees Valley Airport
- Station improvements at Eaglescliffe, Thornaby, and Hartlepool;
- New stations at James Cook University Hospital and one in Redcar & Cleveland

Network Rail will begin the next stage of the design work this autumn, in partnership with Stockton Borough Council across the Tees Valley.

Richard also advised members of the East Billingham Transport Corridor. This scheme is designed to remove HGV's (especially those carrying hazardous chemicals) from residential areas and will be delivered by 2011.

Discussion took place around improvements to Billingham Train Station. Richard advised members that a meeting will be held with Network Rail at the end of September to discuss issues at various Stations including Billingham.

A questions and answers session then took place.

**Q.** Cllr Smith in respect of the metro where is Queens Meadow?.

**A.** It is in a business park at Hartlepool.

**Q.** Cllr Scott – How did Eaglescliffe get chosen for an upgrade as opposed to Billingham?.

**A.** On the original plan Middlesbrough to Darlington line this was expanded to make it intercity towns.

**Q.** Cllr Pollard any thought about a link to the new hospital at Wynyard?

**A.** We are trying to work with NHS on the best ways to look at transport and accessibility. The NHS mitigate their reasoning for putting the hospital at Wynyard.

**Q.** Will there be an enhanced rail link via Billingham and Darlington?.

**A.** Yes via Thornaby.

**Q.** Passenger route Darlington – Saltburn takes more passengers?

**A.** We are hoping people will use the metro as the NHS is parallel with A66.

**Q.** Why does Billingham have to wait until Phase 3?

A. Primary rail links in Phase 1 and Hartlepool is also waiting for Phase 3.

Cllr Atkinson expressed concerns about the number of accidents on the A19. The location of the new hospital build may increase this with diversions via Billingham.

Richard advised members that they would liaise with the police on a study of Billingham and the pattern of accidents. We can think closely about diversions through Billingham in the future.

Cllr McCoy stated that at the meeting to be held with Northern Rail a strong case must be put forward about disabled access at Billingham Station. Also access down to the station from Marsh House Avenue. To endorse Cllr McCoy's statement and also added that residents of Billingham who have relatives with disabilities have to use Thornaby train station to access a train service.

#### **It was resolved**

The update from Richard McGuckin is accepted.

**369/09**

#### **IAN HAYTON, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – Cleveland Fire Brigade – Update on Billingham Fire Station**

Ian was in attendance at the meeting to give members an update on Billingham Fire Station. Ian advised members on the background to the proposal to introduce a new "Concept of Operations" a new way of working to deal with fires in industrial sites which differs from the way we currently deal with house fires. This "Concept of Operations" redefines our approach to industrial incidents and focuses on three main issues: planning and preparing, gathering information and developing incident plans and implementing the plans with sufficient resources. Residents in Teesside will receive the same emergency response as they do now. The new way of working has been developed with our industrial partners to ensure we get the right resources in the right place at the right time and doing the right things. We are confident that by introducing this new way of working safety will not be compromised.

Ian advised members that there are currently three life risk types which include road deaths which have reduced over past 4-5 years, house fires which are one of the biggest causes of deaths in Cleveland and hazardous incidents and how it is dealt with, and how you can deal with such an event in great detail.

For industrial incidents the concept is an approach to dealing with high hazard incidents with a formalised risk assessment process. We can mobilise more than 20 fire engines to an incident on Seal Sands, for example, and in less than 30 minutes all fire engines should be in attendance.

Ian advised members that a review of resources and utilisation at Billingham Fire Station had identified an over provision and that the fire engine has a low utilisation in the Brigade. The standards currently state that one fire engine must attend in 5 minutes, 2 fire engines in 8 minutes and 3 fire engines in 10 minutes. The proposal for Billingham Fire Station does not alter these standards by taking away the engine at Billingham. This will still ensure high quality performance and emergency response standards are maintained. The proposal will ensure that the safety of the public is not compromised. All fire stations are staffed 24 hours.

The brigade are currently working closely with industry to ensure that any incidents within the Seal Sands area are dealt with safely and effectively by identifying the weight of the incident. Ian stated that Cleveland Fire Brigade is the best performer in home fire safety. This includes a 100% coverage in the Clarence's with only one accidental fire within the Clarence's in five years.

In the interests of efficiency there are currently nine whole time fire stations within the area. The cost per call for Billingham is £9,570. Billingham currently has two fire engines and 52 fire officers. The total cost is 2 million per year to run a fire station. With this proposal this would be reduced to 2 million.

We have worked closely with the local planning authority (Stockton Borough Council) to establish long term plans for the Billingham area and the Seal Sands corridor. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure an element of future-proofing for the proposals to remove the fire engine from Billingham.

In summary the safety of the public will not be compromised, we will ensure that existing high quality performance and emergency response standards are maintained and guarantee under-utilisation of resources is reduced and operations are more efficient and effective.

A questions and answers session then took place.

**Q.** Cllr Mockler asked what will happen to the engine taken out of Billingham?

- A.** The engine will be put in reserve appliance arrangements with neighbourhood brigades. There will be a reduction of 22 jobs at the Billingham Station. This will be through natural turnover such as retirements and individuals will be transferred to other fire stations.
- Q.** Cllr McCoy how will a non-fire fighter be able to identify weightage of an industrial incident?
- A.** Site trained personnel will tackle the incident in the first instance.
- Q.** What would happen if the one engine was at an incident then another incident happens?
- A.** Immediately we would be closing in from other areas
- Q.** Cllr Scott how do you allocate response?
- A.** For example if Billingham doesn't get a call. If Clarence's get a call this would go to Billingham & Stockton. Most of Billingham is serviced by Stockton Fire Station at Norton. This is due to the road structure and situation of houses.

At this point the Chair allowed public questions.

Kevin Bowler – North Billingham Residents Association:-

- Q.** Worse case scenario what if one pump breaks down?
- A.** A response would come from Stockton & Hartlepool. However if for some reason no engines are available we would not meet the 5 minutes standard but would meet the 8 minute.
- Q.** Cllr Scott – it would seem that industry is growing I am concerned that there would not be enough coverage as industry is reducing personnel.
- A.** Sembcorp address levels of protection and have trained personnel fire fighters. We are very conscious of the current economic climate. Industry must take contingent measures to reduce the risk to the public in accordance with the HSE regulations safety measures.

Ian stated that he would be happy to attend residents groups to ensure that members of the public are happy about safety and answer any questions on the proposal.

**It was resolved**

Ian and his team were thanked for attending the meeting. The update on Billingham Fire Station is accepted.

At this point Cllr Mike Smith left the meeting.

**370/09 MIKE BOWRON, REGENERATION – Stockton Borough Council**

Mike advised members that concerns had been raised from Billingham Town Council in respect of contractors who are working on the Forum development allegedly parking on The Causeway and not within the site car park. Mike stated that this issue has now been eradicated. Mike informed members that sub-contractors will be in the building stripping out within the next few weeks. Posters updating residents on progress with photographs of changes will be placed within the window of the Art Gallery. Also Stockton Borough Councils website will be updated.

Mike informed members that monies had been received from Salix financing to install high energy efficient heating system for the building.

Members stated that they are pleased with the quality of the contractor Morgan Ashurst.

In respect of Billingham Town Centre Cllr McCoy advised that Stockland the developer have been given a 9 month extension to ensure that the master plan has more detail for consultation.

Cllr McCoy stated that Safer Stockton Partnership have been installing new signs within Billingham and that it would be good if the signs are retained once the re-development is complete.

**It was resolved**

The update from Mike Bowron is accepted.

Mike was thanked for attending the meeting.

**371/09 MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

**It was resolved**

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**372/09 MATTERS ARISING – from minutes of meeting (discussion only)**

Cllr McCoy raised an issue following Inspector Micklewright's, (Billingham Police Station) attendance at the Town Council meeting on 16 June 2009. The police have stated that they are maintaining the Police and Police Community Support Officers regardless of what auditors have recommended and plan to maintain the number of police. Therefore the category is classed as "adequate". There is to be a resolution at Stockton Borough Council and then this will be brought to the next Town Council meeting.

On page 6 of the minutes **356/09** matters arising –Neighbourhood Watch Schemes the Executive Officer to speak to Fred Gook and Safer Billingham Partnership and Marilyn Davis.

On page 9 **360/09 Planning** - The Executive Officer advised members that the proposal for the New Fire Station (demoliton of existing fire station, Seaton Carew Road, Port Clarence has been approved.

The Executive Officer advised members that she has received a copy of the plans for Bede Sixth Form College, Hale Road, Billingham development in respect of the erection of a 5 metre fence around the new college building.

The Executive Officer advised members that the revised plans are for a 8 metre fence. Should members have any objections these need to be submitted to the Executive Officer.

**373/09 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee on 10th September 2009.

**It was resolved**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings and the recommendations made by the Committee are to be accepted.

**374/09**

**MATTERS ARISING** – from the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Members discussed item **FR82/09 Donations**. The donation request from Billingham Rugby Union (Youth Section) – Family Fun Day 15<sup>th</sup> August 2009, Silhouttes Jazz Band and Kazoku Karate club. Members approved these donations requests with the exception of Billingham Rugby Union (Youth Section).

Cllr Scott advised members that the request from North Billingham Residents Association for funding into ways of stopping/reducing the rat run by drivers between Rievaulx Avenue and Marsh House Avenue via Tamworth Road and Braemar has been put to the Transport Strategy group and will be discussed at the meeting in October 2009. the Executive Officer advised that this is to be discussed later in the meeting re: Tamworth Road.

**It was resolved**

The donation requests for Silhouttes Jazz Band and Kazoku Karate club are accepted.

**375/09**

**MINUTES OF THE SERVICES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE ON 10th SEPTEMBER 2009**

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the minutes of the Services & Amenities Committee on 10th September 2009.

**It was resolved**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings and the recommendations made by the Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 are to be accepted.

**376/09**

**MATTERS ARISING** – from the minutes of the Services & Amenities Committee on the 10th September 2009

CRB checks – Independent Safeguard Authority. (Cllrs McCoy & Metcalfe asked if they are to have new CRB checks to be part of the activities at John Whitehead Park Christmas event (lost children area). The Executive Officer advised that she is looking into this.

In respect of item **SA24/09 Projects (Including Youth Café update Allotment update)** the Executive Officer advised members that she had drawn up a questionnaire in respect of the Youth Cafe aimed at youths.

This questionnaire was utilised as a survey at the Billingham Carnival on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009 to ascertain views from youngsters around usage of the Youth Café. The Executive Officer advised members that the responses are currently being analysed.

At this point Cllrs Scott and Mockler left the meeting (8.35 p.m.)

The Executive Officer gave an update in respect of allotments and advised members of a meeting she had attended with the Chair and Jamie McCann, Head of Direct Services, Stockton Borough Council.

Jamie is happy to work in partnership with Billingham Town Council to look at viable pieces of land. It was suggested that Billingham Town Council become more involved with residents groups to identify local areas which could be possible allotment sites. Stockton Borough Council will give out maps for each ward for residents to mark suggested sites and possible history of identified sites.

The Executive Officer advised members that on **item SA26/09 Other Business** the Committee has requested exploring the possibility of purchasing additional grit bins.

At this point Cllr Stoker left the meeting (8.40 pm.)

The Chair thanked the Executive Officer and General Office Assistant for attendance and co-ordination of the Town Council promotional stand at the Billingham Carnival held on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Cllr McCall also expressed his thanks.

It was reported that the flowers tubs on Finchdale Avenue at the entrance to John Whitehead Park had gone missing.

**It was resolved:**

The updates approved and accepted.

**377/09**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT**

The Executive Officer advised members on the progress of projects. (Previously circulated).

**It was resolved:**

The Executive Officers report is accepted.

**378/09 FINANCE**

The members considered the monthly Schedule of Accounts previously circulated.

**It was resolved**

The monthly accounts are accepted for payment.

**379/09 PLANNING**

The planning application report (previously circulated) was reviewed/discussed by members.

**It was resolved:**

The planning applications are approved.

**380/09 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chair closed the meeting at this point for 10 minutes to allow public participation.

Kevin Bowler asked for Billingham Town Council's support on match funding for traffic calming measures on Tamworth Road on behalf of Billingham North Residents Association.

The Executive Officer explained that Billingham Town Council will push the Transport Strategy group for more money to be put into this project.

Kevin stated that in respect of the Metro Scheme – Billingham Railway Station should be a priority in the link especially with the new hospital at Wynyard.

Kevin professed his concerns/worries regarding the handling of the Town Centre regeneration.

**It was resolved**

Members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting.

**381/09            CORRESPONDENCE**

No items of correspondence were discussed.

**It was resolved**

No items of correspondence discussed.

**382/09            OTHER BUSINESS**

Members stated that they were very happy with the activities which were recently scheduled for children within the Town Centre. Neil Schneider, Chief Executive of Stockton Borough Council was thanked for this support.

**383/09            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009** commencing at 6.30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

**Signed.....**  
**Chairman to Billingham Town Council**