

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 15th June, 2006.

Present: Cllr Gibson (Chairman) Mrs P A Cains, Cllr D Coleman, Cllr B Cook, Cllr A Cunningham, Cllr E Johnson, Cllr P Kirton, Cllr K Leonard, Cllr S Nelson, Cllr Mrs J O'Donnell

Officers: J.Haworth (CE); A.Baxter, R.Hill, A.Stephenson (CESC); N.Schneider, I.Thompson (DNS); D.E.Bond, N.Hart (LD); J.Danks @.

Also in attendance: Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Frankland, Lupton and Mrs Rigg; S.Chaytor (Tees Active).

Apologies:

251 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled 'Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies' as a result of being a Governing Body member of one of the schools affected.

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled 'School Term and Holiday Dates 2007/2008' due to a family member being affected by the proposals. Councillor Coleman also declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of this item.

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled 'Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2007' as a result of the proposals affecting a family member.

Councillors Coleman, Gibson, Leonard and Kirton each declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in respect of the item entitled 'Voluntary Sector Support Fund' as a result of their association with various voluntary sector groups in receipt of the funding under review. Councillor Mrs Cains also declared a personal non prejudicial interest in this matter as her husband was an adviser to Stockton District Information and Advice Service.

Councillors Mrs Beaumont and Mrs O'Donnell each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled 'Splash/Stockton Sports Centre Facilities Review' as a result of their role as Council representatives on Tees Active. Councillor Mrs Cains also declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of this item as she was a governor of one of the schools referred to in the report as providing leisure opportunities.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item as a result of being a Governing Body member of one of the schools affected.

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item due to a family member being affected by the proposals.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of this item.

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item as a result of the proposals affecting a family member.

None

Councillors Mrs Beaumont and Mrs O'Donnell each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item as a result of their role as Council representatives on Tees Active.

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of this item as she was a governor of one of the schools referred to in the report as providing leisure opportunities.

None

Councillors Coleman, Gibson, Leonard and Kirton each declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in respect of their association with various voluntary sector groups in receipt of the funding under review.

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal non prejudicial interest in this matter as her husband was an adviser to Stockton District Information and Advice Service.

None

None

252 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th May 2006

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th May 2006 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

253 Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies

Cabinet Members were requested to consider the nominations to school Governing Bodies in accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school governors, approved as Minute 84 of the cabinet (11 May 2000).

RESOLVED that the appointments to the following School Governing Bodies be approved in line with agreed procedures subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure:-

Ash Trees School	Mrs A M McCoy
Bader Primary	Councillor D Brown
Egglescliffe CE Primary	Mrs J Johnson
King Edwin School	Councillor Mrs Beaumont
Myton Park Primary	Mr P Mallon
	Mr D Scott
Roseworth Primary	Mrs J Appleby
St Mark's Elm Tree CE VA Primary	PC D Greaves

Cabinet Members were requested to consider the nominations to school Governing Bodies in accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school governors, approved as Minute 84 of the cabinet (11th May 2000). RESOLVED that the appointments to the following School Governing Bodies be approved in line with agreed procedures subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure:-

Ash Trees School	Mrs A.M.McCoy
Bader Primary	Cllr D.Brown
Egglescliffe CE Primary	Mrs J.Johnson
King Edwin School	Cllr Mrs Beaumont
Myton Park Primary	Mr P.Mallon
	Mr D.Scott
Roseworth Primary	Mrs J.Appleby
St Mark's Elm Tree CE VA Primary	PC D.Greaves

254 School Term and Holiday Dates 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a proposed calendar of school term and holiday dates for the 2007/2008 academic year.

The Local Government Association had encouraged local authorities to consider moving towards a six-term year or at least reach agreement on the principle of a "fixed Easter". The position locally had been that our neighbours in Hartlepool had attempted to co-ordinate a move regionally to a six-term year, however, this had been unsuccessful, primarily because schools in the area would only support such a move if it were part of a national move.

For 2007/2008 Hartlepool had again taken the lead and asked all Authorities in the region to consider a matrix of dates which introduced the concept of a "fixed Easter".

All schools in the Borough and all other relevant parties, including Trade Unions and Associations, had been consulted and consideration was given to the responses received. All were supportive of the proposal, however the Associations and Unions had expressed concerns with both models in that by fixing the Easter Holiday away from the religious festival weekend, their already agreed annual conferences would fall in term time. However, an agreement was in place which allowed members time off with pay to attend such matters.

RESOLVED that the school term and holiday dates for the 2007/2008 academic year, detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

255 Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools in Septemebr 2007

Consideration was given to the proposed admission arrangements for primary and secondary schools in September 2007; which, in accordance with legislation requirements, included the full co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

for both sectors of school for that year. Key changes to the admission arrangements were summarised in respect of:-

- (i) Changes to the admission policy for 2007/08 which includes
 - Moving Special Educational Needs to Criterion 2 and
 - priority to brothers and sisters apply for places in a primary school when older siblings were not able to get a place in the admission zone school at the time of entry to reception as Criterion 3.
- (ii) Extension of the admission zone for Northfield Secondary and William Cassidi Church of England (CE) Primary School to include part of Wynyard Estate which is in Hartlepool Borough.
- (iii) The withdrawal of free transport to Bishopton Primary School in Darlington Borough for Stockton on Tees residents who prefer to send their children to that school rather than their admission zone school
- (iv) Agree the timetable for Stockton on Tees Primary and Secondary Co-ordinated admission arrangements and change of allocations for the majority of Roman Catholic (RC) Primary Schools to 1st preference 1st .
- (v) The Protocol for Hard to place pupils.
- (vi) Admission numbers for 2007 due to an update for Net Capacity Assessments
- (vii) Policy on placement of pupils out of their chronological age group

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for primary and secondary schools be approved.

256 Youth Matters : Next Steps

Members were advised that in July 2005 the Government had published its Green Paper 'Youth Matters' that set out a vision to transform the lives of every young person through a radical reshaping of provision. Following consultation with key stakeholders, including young people, Stockton-on-Tees Council had submitted its views on the Youth Matters proposals in October.

In March 2006 the Government had published its response to the national consultation in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps'. Consideration was given to:-

- the key messages in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps';
- the proposed arrangements for the use of the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund;
- the consultation that had taken place on services to support young people;
- the work that had been done with partners on developing local integrated youth support services;
- a proposal on how a local youth offer might be delivered in the context of geographically based Extended School clusters and Integrated Service Areas.

Members welcomed the fact that strategies were now in place to provide services for young people and it was important for this message to be communicated as widely as possible.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Cabinet agrees to officers undertaking consultation with all stakeholders on the proposals set out in the report for the development of a local youth offer through the development of integrated youth support services and, that a report detailing the outcomes of the consultation, with a proposed structure for developing and delivering local integrated youth support services, is considered at a future meeting of Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board.
- (ii) A report detailing the local implications and implementation of any future guidance issued by the Government is considered by Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board when the guidance becomes available.
- (iii) Cabinet agrees the allocation of £113,272 released by the Department for Education and Skills for the Youth Capital Fund be included in the Council's 2006-2007 Capital Programme.
- (iv) Cabinet supports the proposed arrangements for the deployment of the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund and that a further report on the potential location of subsequent youth cafes is brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

257 Splash/Stockton Sports Centre Facilities Review

Consideration was given to proposals to extend the Splash leisure facility thereby concentrating the major leisure public sector provision in Stockton in one, central location.

The rationale for a 'one site' solution was to address the major difficulties presented by Stockton Sports Centre and the opportunities presented by the Splash site, which were set within the context of the changing profile of publicly accessible leisure facilities in Stockton Borough and the need to develop a sustainable, strategic approach to the provision of major leisure facilities.

In February 2001 an Asset Management Condition Survey of Stockton Sports Centre indicated extensive and significant issues affecting all aspects of the facility, estimated at least £900k to rectify. At current prices this work would cost around £1million with at least further £1million being required to bring the facilities up to a standard of design consistent with modern customer demands. However, despite, funding restrictions and competing demands on the limited capital programme, it had been possible to maintain the facility and develop the service through short-term maintenance and a positive approach to the promotion of activities at the centre. In recent months however there has been increasing pressure on the service through the failure of specific elements of the facility. The floodlit, artificial pitch was now closed for health and safety reasons and would only be useable in the most favourable, dry conditions in the summer. All users had been successfully relocated at alternative facilities. It was well past its natural lifespan and must be completely re-laid and refurbished if it is to come back into regular use. Depending on the type of surface and additional works to fences and lights, this work would cost £200-300k. In addition, problems with the squash courts, roof, drainage and main sports hall would require at least £50k this year in order to remain fully operational in the short-term.

In short, the facility had reached the point of being unviable without urgent investment. However, as operators, Tees Active could not be expected to invest

in a failing building with an uncertain future and the Council would only wish to invest in a facility with a sustainable future.

Splash, on the other hand, continued to attract greater numbers of visitors and enjoyed an excellent central location with good car parking and access through public transport. Its proximity to the town's retail centre also marked Splash as an ideal location allowing visitors to combine easily leisure and shopping, thereby increasing the economic vitality of the town centre. The Splash site also offered opportunities to expand an already successful facility and build on a growing customer base.

The provision of public leisure facilities must also be considered in the context of the other leisure opportunities that have emerged in the past five years, notably in the private sector and in association with schools. In addition, affordability and financial sustainability were key factors. In the past five years there had been developments at several secondary schools within the Borough increasing public access to sports halls and artificial, floodlit sports areas. Even with the removal of Stockton Sports Centre, there would still be significantly more publicly accessible sports halls and artificial pitches available in the borough than there were five years ago. Taken in a long-term strategic context, the development of a one-site operation at Splash, the removal of Stockton Sports Centre and the development of school sites will lead to an improved and sustainable stock of facilities and an improved leisure offer to the people of Stockton Borough. Crucially, it would also maintain the strategy of ensuring there were wet and dry facilities in each of the three major townships. The implications for the future delivery of the current services provided at Stockton Sports Centre were summarised.

The key proposed changes to the Splash building included:

- Extended Activ8 fitness facility on the first floor approximately doubling the current capacity and changing rooms.
- Including specialist treatment area for health service activities currently provided at Stockton Sports Centre. This includes the back care clinic, outpatients physiotherapy services, and all other health services currently operating from the Stockton Sports Centre health suite.
- Extended foyer and relocated reception desk.
- Expanded café/catering area
- Specialist children's play barn
- Two new multi-activity spaces and changing facilities approximately replacing two activity spaces at Stockton Sports Centre
- Relocated staff/management accommodation and meeting room
- Extended changing facilities for swimming pool to accommodate the increased demand
- Re-alignment of car parking bays
- Addition of a four court sports hall to accommodate activities currently hosted in the Stockton Sports Centre sports hall
- Ability to utilise sports hall as central civic function venue

The financial implications of the proposals fell into two categories. Firstly, regarding the funding the capital development and secondly the revenue implications for Tees Active. The extended Splash had been costed at approximately £4.2m which could be funded through prudential borrowing at an annual cost of £324k over a 25-year period. This would be recovered directly

from Tees Active Ltd management fee. The implications of this on the Council's VAT position were summarised which would require future capital bids to be monitored and vetted and the potential risks identified early enough, so that the position could be managed.

The revenue position for Tees Active would result in savings from the closure of Stockton Sports Centre even assuming that all staff were redeployed. The new expanded cost centre at Splash was likely to result in more revenue with additional staff and premises costs being covered by the additional income generated.

The great advantage of adopting proposals based on the principle of extending Splash as a one-site operation for leisure in Stockton was that it released the revenue associated with the current Stockton Sports Centre to help repayment of borrowing costs. Any proposals based on re-developing Stockton Sports Centre would not release any revenue funding and would consequently impose a significantly greater financial burden on the authority. It was clear, therefore, that with the full savings from the closure of Stockton Sports Centre, Stockton Borough Council and Tees Active would be able to develop a new, sustainable facility with minimal or no additional revenue burden.

RESOLVED that :-

1. That Cabinet accept the principle of a 'one-site' leisure solution for central Stockton with an emphasis on health and fitness and family based activity.
2. That the proposed content of the extended Splash be approved as detailed at paragraphs 18-19 of the report.
3. That the proposed timetable and project plan for the closure be approved.
4. Cabinet authorise officers of the Council to work with Tees Active to ensure customers and user groups are kept fully informed of proposals and are assisted to find bespoke alternative provision where appropriate.
5. Cabinet approve the financial plan proposed in paragraphs 23-28 of the report.
6. Officers of the council be authorised to complete detailed plans, apply for appropriate consents and prepare to submit the work for tender.
7. Plans and designs for the new facility be displayed in the Members Library and Splash when they are available with invitation for comments.
8. Officers report back to members at a later date with the proposed solution, at a cost-neutral effect to the Council, to the car parking issue as highlighted in consultation with users.
9. Following consultation, final plans and designs agreement be delegated to Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure and Culture.

258 Implementing the White Paper/Changes to the Service Development Partnership (SDP)

Consideration was given to proposed revised structures to address the Health & Social Care Adults agenda and the way forward in developing a Vision for Adults.

The introduction of the Adult Care Partnership provided a mechanism to address the strategic needs of Adults within Stockton. It aimed to be an outward facing structure that engaged with external partners to co-ordinate and plan services for Adults.

In parallel with the new Partnership structures, the existing Service Development Partnership (SDP) needed to be reshaped to link appropriately with the Council and PCT to address the White Paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say and ensure that this national direction of travel was effectively shaped for the population of Stockton. The Adult Care Planning Group was the revised structure to support this agenda.

Details of the new roles and responsibilities were proposed and acknowledgement was given to how this would link with other parts of the agenda, such as children's and health improvement.

The proposed terms of reference of the Partnership had taken into account the Children and Health Improvement structures and have attempted to mirror these elements whilst building upon the work of the Service Development Partnership. RESOLVED that :-

1. A new Adult Care Partnership be developed to ensure the necessary focus for adults and older people in Stockton. This Partnership would be a strategic group involving a range of partners that will develop the vision for Adults.
2. Cabinet agree to the dissolution of the Service Development Partnership and the introduction of the Adult Care Planning Group as the new structure to support the delivery of the White Paper Our Health Our Care Our Say across Stockton Borough Council and North Tees PCT

259 Voluntary Sector Support Fund Review

Consideration was given to a proposed process for reviewing the Council's Voluntary Sector Core Funding, which currently provided financial support in the region of £400k per annum to eleven of the main voluntary and community sector organisations in the Borough.

The review reflected changes made to the sector including an independent review of the Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) umbrella organisations which was currently underway. It was anticipated that the independent review of the Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) umbrella organisations would be

finalised and organisational changes implemented by the end of June 2006. Therefore it was proposed to hold a seminar in July to inform Council Members of the final arrangements and to kick start the review of the Voluntary Sector Support Core Funding. This seminar would also include representation from services across the Council to help identify desired outcomes from the voluntary sector which would support key strategies. It would be important to build into the review consultation with the voluntary and community sector as appropriate.

Details of the timetable of the review; which would culminate in a further report to Cabinet in September 2006, were submitted.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the proposed process and timetable for the review of the Council's Voluntary Sector Core Funding.

260 Regeneration of Billingham Town Centre - Demolition of Forum House and the former La Ronde Nightclub

consideration was given to approval for the release of additional capital resource for the demolition of two derelict buildings in Billingham Town Centre, namely Forum House and La Ronde nightclub as the precursor to the redevelopment of Billingham Town Centre.

It was noted that since the preparation of the report, and following more extensive investigations on site, the outcome of the asbestos survey had revealed the need for more works to be done to remove the asbestos discovered in the building. The cost of these works was an extra £102,470, resulting in a revised total expenditure of £538,320 for the necessary demolition works. This would be drawn down from the existing £1.7M funding set aside for the development works within Billingham Town Centre.

RESOLVED that:-

1). The content of the report, and the updated financial works required regarding the necessary asbestos works, be noted.

2). Cabinet approve the revised total expenditure of £538,320 for the works and approve the use of additional Capital resources of £151,021 to be drawn down from the £1 million Capital Resource to facilitate the redevelopment of Billingham Town Centre.

261 Minutes of Various Bodies

Consideration was given to minutes of meetings of the Renaissance Board and the Eastern Area Partnership Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Renaissance Board and the Area Partnership Board be received/approved, as appropriate.

262 Ethical Governance AUdit - 2006/07

Consideration was given to proposed ethical governance audit arrangements for 2006/2007.

“Ethical governance was concerned about the standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements in relation to financial and commercial activities.” (Hansard 1994) Its importance was illustrated by its inclusion within Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 which sought to promote confidence in local democracy by introducing new arrangements to ensure the highest ethical standards.

The importance of the ethical agenda had also led to an ethics component being included in the Audit Commission’s triennial Comprehensive Performance Assessment of single tier and county councils and in its annual assessment of a Council’s “use of resources”.

Ethical Governance audits assisted Councils to examine current procedures; examine current practices; implement the ethical framework; check and review progress; and provide a “reality check” and highlight deficiencies arising from poor systems and procedures. They could be used as an initial diagnostic tool; as an aid to implementation of the ethical framework and in ensuring a robust approach to monitoring, review and updating the framework; and specifically could:-

- ensure that new Council arrangements are open, accountable and ethically strong
 - promote high standards of conduct
 - assist in building a “bond of trust” between Councils and communities
 - identify best practice for sharing and dissemination.
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- inform proposals for continuous improvement and help the Standards Committee to fulfil their role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and assisting Members to observe the Code of Conduct.

A “snap-shot” ethical governance survey had been carried out at Stockton in 2001 following a report to the Standards Committee in December 2000, followed by a more detailed ethical governance audit undertaken during 2003/04. The reports explained that the Council had developed a wide ranging array of audit, survey and developmental tools and was subject to a variety of inspection arrangements, which together represented a detailed set of ethical governance assessment processes.

For the purposes of the proposed 2006/07 audit, again, developing our previous approaches to the process, it was proposed to:-

- utilise a range of existing or proposed processes which will provide insights into the ethical health of the organisation;
- re-survey Members (including co-optees), Officers and key Partners (and, if practicable, the public); and to
- report back in detail on the outcomes of the various processes and of the survey, and produce an action plan for improvement.

It was also proposed to use the ethical governance toolkit refined and published by the Standards Board for England, the Audit Commission and the IdeA. The

purpose of the toolkit was to help local authorities to assess how well they were meeting the ethical agenda and to improve further their arrangements. The intention was to use the light touch health check element of the toolkit which itself resulted in a report and action plan.

RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The proposals relating to the 2006/07 ethical governance audit arrangements be agreed; and that
2. Subject to this, the Director of Law and Democracy, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, the Leader and the Deputy Leader, be authorised to co-ordinate the audit, including finalising and circulating the survey forms; undertaking the desk top study and arranging the IDeA light touch health check.

263 Information Items

The following reports were provided for Members' information:-

- Review of England's Waste Strategy
- Safer Stockton Partnership Annual Report 2005/2006
- Tristar Improvement Plan Progress.