

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 22nd May, 2008.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Alex Cunningham, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

Officers: G Garlick (CE); H Dean (ACE); J Danks, J Spittle (RES); A Baxter, T Beckwith (CESC); N Schneider, D Walsh (DNS); D Bond, M Henderson (LD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Steve Walmsley, Cllr Maurice Frankland, Cllr Hilary Aggio; S Boyd (TRI); S Nicklin, C Andrew (Audit Commission)

Apologies: Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Steve Nelson

CAB 20/08

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled Strategy For Change, Primary Capital Programme as he was a Governor at Norton Primary School and left the room for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled Strategy For Change, Primary Capital Programme as she had a close relative who attended Levendale Primary School and left the room for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement as he served on the Regional Development Agency Board.

CAB 21/08

Minutes of the meetings held on 21 February 2008, 13 March 2008 and 24 April 2008

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 February 2008, 13 March 2008 and 24 April 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CAB 22/08

Strategy For Change, Primary Capital Programme

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Strategy for Change for the Primary Capital Programme.

It was explained that in December 2007 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) issued guidance for Local Authorities on developing, agreeing and implementing a strategic approach to capital investment for primary schools. Part of that guidance was a requirement for Local Authorities to prepare a Strategy for Change document that would be considered by DCSF in June, 2008.

Members were informed that subject to agreement the Council would receive capital allocations for the next 14 years to support the delivery of the Children's Plan by creating primary schools equipped for 21st century learning at the heart of the community with a range of children's services in reach of every family. The objective for primary schools in Stockton on Tees would be to rebuild,

remodel or refurbish at least half of all schools. The draft Strategy was the product of work undertaken within the Council and with partners such as Dioceses to identify the principles by which priorities would be established and those schools that should receive investment in the first five years of the Programme. Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the draft strategy.

RESOLVED that the Strategy for Change for the Primary Capital Programme be approved and that it be submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in June, 2008 in anticipation that funding for the Programme will start in April, 2009.

CAB 23/08 Joint Area Review (JAR) and Youth Service Inspection Reports

Consideration was given to a report that presented the final published reports from Ofsted following the Joint Area Review of services for children and young people in the Stockton area, and the linked inspection of the Council's Youth Service

Members were informed that all the services inspected had been rated as good or outstanding. The graded judgements were as follows, based on a 4 point scale, with grade 3 being 'good' and grade 4 'outstanding':

Joint Area Review/Grade
Safeguarding/3
Looked after children/3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities/4
Service management/3
Capacity to improve/4

Youth Service/Grade
Standards of young people's achievement/3
Quality of youth work practice/3
Quality of curriculum and resources/3
Leadership and management/3

Members of Cabinet were provided with copies of the JAR and Youth Service Inspection Reports.

RESOLVED that the reports be received and the positive outcomes of the JAR and Youth Service inspections be noted.

CAB 24/08 Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies

Members considered 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 following appointments be made to the vacant Governorships in line with agreed procedures subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure:
St. Patrick's RC VA Primary School - Cllr W Woodhead

**CAB
25/08**

Disposal of the Building and Associated Site known as Parkfield Hall

Consideration was given to a report relating to the disposal of the building and associated site known as Parkfield Hall.

It was explained that the property of Parkfield Hall was declared surplus to requirements by Health and Social Care in October 2007 and the Parkfield Hall site had been identified as an ideal location for the development of a new build scheme, which could offer 8 units of single supported living accommodation for vulnerable young people aged 18 to 25 plus 2 units of supported single parent accommodation.

It was noted that the building and site offered an ideal opportunity to attract major capital investment from Housing Partners with a relatively small level of expenditure by the Council.

It was proposed that the asset be used as contributory funding in a Housing Corporation bid, which could potentially deliver a new-build valued at approximately £1.5m. This was based on an assumed successful bid to the Housing Corporation for £600,000 plus an additional investment by Endeavour Housing Association (appointed as partners in the process following a successful bidding process) of £725,000.

Members of Cabinet were advised that a report was presented to the Capital Asset Strategy Group on 2 May outlining the options around the disposal of the site. This was considered and agreed subject to final approval by cabinet.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The transfer of the property and site known as Parkfield Hall, situated at Bowesfield Lane, Stockton on Tees, formerly used by Health and Social Care as an Adult Day Centre, to Endeavour Housing Association, subject to the successful securing of Housing Corporation funding, be approved.
2. The transfer of any part of the property and site be done so at a nil residual cost to Endeavour Housing, taking into consideration the maximisation of best value options in the use of the site and adjacent area by the Council.

**CAB
26/08**

Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement

Consideration was given to a report that presented the draft Multi Area Agreement (MAA) prepared by the Council, together with the other Tees Valley Authorities, One NorthEast (ONE) and Government Office for the North East (GONE). It was explained that MAAs were first highlighted in the Local Government White Paper in October 2006, and the Tees Valley MAA would be one of the first of its kind in the country, representing a trailblazing form of city regional devolution for areas outside of the core cities.

Members were advised that the MAA was the mechanism by which the place-making elements of the City Region Business Case, prepared in September 2006, would be implemented. It covered regeneration, housing and transport projects, as these were critical to economic development, and one of the strengths of the Tees Valley proposal was the ability to join together the

currently separate investment streams with confidence that Government Departments would together provide the necessary backing in a timely manner.

It was suggested that, given the importance of this issue, an all Member Seminar be arranged

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the draft MAA.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the draft MAA as presented be endorsed and that the Chief Executive and Senior Officers be authorised to negotiate the final version of the MAA, in line with this endorsement, with Central Government by the end of June 2008.
2. An all Member seminar be arranged on this issue.

**CAB
27/08** **Minutes of Various Bodies**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of Area Partnership Boards.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings be received/approved, as appropriate:-

Western Area Partnership 31 March 2008
The Billingham Partnership 7 April 2008

**CAB
28/08** **Audit Commission Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2008**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Audit Commission Annual Audit & Inspection Letter for 2008, (formerly the Management Letter).

It was explained that the Audit Commission was responsible for arranging for the audit of the accounts of the Council (either by private firms or through their own auditors). They were also responsible for undertaking an annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment and other service inspections.

A formal stage in this process was the production of the "Annual Audit & Inspection Letter", formerly, the Management Letter. Members of Cabinet were presented with a copy of the Annual Audit & Inspection Letter for 2007/08.

The Annual Audit Letter provided a comprehensive and independent assessment of the "health" of the Council. It was noted that in line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED that the contents of the letter be noted.

**CAB
29/08** **Draft Local Area Agreement 2008-11**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined progress made in negotiating the borough's new Local Area Agreement.

In October 2007 Cabinet agreed a Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough to cover 2008-2021. The strategy set out the Council's vision and priorities for the borough and was based on extensive consultation. The strategy sat at the top of the Council's planning hierarchy and defined five core priority themes and three supporting themes.

It was explained that the Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008-11 formed a delivery plan for the first three years of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The LAA consisted of two parts – a range of designated measures which had three year improvement targets that were agreed with the secretary of state and “local measures “ where an area wished to include additional measures to reflect priorities but these were not subject to ministerial sign off. The designated measures had to be selected from the new National Indicator Set of 198 measures. In addition there were 16 mandatory measures from the Department for Children, Schools and Families relating to educational attainment.

Members were advised that throughout the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement there had been extensive consultation and engagement with thematic and area partnerships as well as local people and councillors.

Members were provided with the list of measures and provisional targets for the designated measures section. It was explained that the measures had been selected from the 198 National Indicators as the measures that most closely reflected the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. There was good spread across priority themes and across the public sector agencies responsible for delivering the agreement.

It was explained that the Council had the option to include additional measures within the agreement. These were known as “local measures” and are not subject to ministerial target signoff and did not have to be drawn from the National Indicator Set. It was proposed to include a small number of measures in the local section of the LAA at this stage with targets to be set as part of the usual performance management cycle by the end of June. Members were provided with a copy of the local measures.

It was explained that the Tees Valley had been leading the way in developing a Multi Area Agreement focusing on improving the economic prosperity of the city region. One element of the agreement was a performance framework which in some cases drew on the National Indicator Set. In order to ensure there was read across between the Stockton LAA and the MAA the Council would be ensuring that MAA indicators which were also local priorities would be included in the LAA's designated measures and where an MAA indicator was of lower priority in Stockton it was included in the local measures section.

It was noted that the measures would be incorporated into the council's overarching corporate basket and reported to Cabinet and Executive Scrutiny at an appropriate frequency. As the agreement covered all public sector agencies in the borough it would also be reported to Stockton Renaissance twice a year.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The good progress made in negotiating the new Local Area Agreement be noted.
2. The draft Local Area Agreement be agreed and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to agree any further amendments arising from final negotiations with government.

**CAB
30/08** **Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2007**

Consideration was given to a report that provided information in relation to the Corporate Performance Assessment 2007.

Members were advised that in March 2008, the Audit Commission rated the council as “a four star council” that was “improving strongly” in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This report details our performance

It was explained that 2005 saw the Audit Commission implement a revised CPA framework, badged as “the harder test” and introduced a new scoring framework. Councils received a star rating (from zero to four stars) and an improvement judgement ranging from not improving adequately to improving strongly. In 2007, Stockton was rated as “4 star, improving strongly” for the second time.

Members were advised that the standard that had to be met to achieve each of the performance levels had also been raised. Each element was scored on a 1 to 4 basis. Members were provided with the details of the new model. Members were informed of the Councils performance against each of the elements in the model that contributed to the star rating. The ratings were as follows:

Corporate assessment (based on our 2004 assessment) 4
Social Care (adults) 3
Children and young people 4
Use of resources including value for money 4
Housing 4
Culture 3
Environment 3
Benefits 4

Members were provided with a summary of the Councils performance in the different areas that made up the assessment.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB
31/08** **Corporate Assessment Results and Improvement Plan**

Consideration was given to a report that provided Cabinet with the results of the Council’s corporate assessment which had taken place in December 2007. The Audit Commission published its report on the Council in April 2008. It was noted that Stockton Borough Council achieved the highest corporate assessment rating of any council inspected to date outside London.

Members were provided with the details of the Comprehensive Performance

Assessment – the Harder Test Model, introduced in 2005.

It was explained that the inspection had taken place over a two week period in December with an inspection team of five, including a peer member and a peer officer. Prior to the inspection the Council submitted a self assessment against the Audit Commission's published Key Lines of Enquiry together with a range of supporting evidence. The inspectors commented that they found the self assessment to be very useful and the Audit Commission had also used it as an example of good practice with other councils preparing for corporate assessment.

Members were informed of the results of the inspection as follows:-

Theme Score (out of 4)
Ambition 4
Prioritisation 4
Capacity 3
Performance Management 4
Achievement 3

It was noted that the results represented a significant achievement. In comparing these results to other councils with corporate assessment reports published at the same time or before Stockton councils it was clear that few had achieved this level of performance.

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the full corporate assessment report.

Details of the areas identified by the inspectors as needing improvement were also provided. The issues had been built into the Council Plan and Service Improvement Plans for the coming year. It was noted that progress against them would be highlighted in future performance reports.

Members of Cabinet were informed that this was the last time that the Council would receive a "corporate assessment". The CPA regime which corporate assessment was part of was due to end in 2009 and be replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment. Further details of what the framework would look like were expected in the coming months.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report, and in particular the Audit Commission's report, be noted.
2. The areas for improvement be noted and progress updates as part of future performance monitoring reports be received.

**CAB
32/08**

Appointment Panel for Post of Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of the proposed arrangements for the Appointment Panel for the post of Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care.

It was explained that the Council's Employee Employment Procedure Rules required Cabinet to consider and refer to full Council with recommendations for approval, arrangements for the appointment of Chief Officers (e.g. Corporate Directors).

In order to ensure that the required Appointment Panel for the post of Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care was established as a matter of urgency, Cabinet was asked to consider the following proposals and recommend them for approval at the next meeting of full Council on 2 July 2008.

In accordance with the normal arrangements for Chief Officer and Assistant Chief Officers appointments, Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council that a Panel for the appointment of the Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care be established on the following basis:-

Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health
Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure and Culture
One Member from another political group.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed Appointment Panel arrangements outlined above be approved.

**CAB
33/08** **Cabinet Member Portfolios**

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of proposed changes to the current Cabinet Member portfolio responsibilities.

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the current Cabinet Member portfolios.

It was proposed to establish an additional Cabinet Member portfolio by separating the existing Corporate and Social Inclusion portfolio into two. This involved the creation of a Corporate Management and Finance portfolio and a separate Access and Communities portfolio. It was considered that the proposal fitted more appropriately with the present functionally based approach to Cabinet portfolios. Copies of the two new portfolios were presented to Members.

It was explained that in addition, it was proposed to extend the Leader's portfolio to include the following:-

- Sports Development
- Tourism
- Development of Tees Valley Sport Partnership
- High Achievement in Sport - Strategy and Policy

It was noted that if agreed, this would necessitate amendments to the Regeneration and Transport and Arts, Leisure and Culture portfolios. The revised Leader, Regeneration and Transport and Arts, Leisure and Culture portfolios were also presented to Members of Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed changes specified in the report and Appendix 2 to the report be approved.

**CAB
34/08** **Exclusion of public**

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the following item of business as consideration of it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**CAB
35/08** **Planning for the Future 3**

Consideration was given to a report that responded to the commitments made by Cabinet over the last 18 months to review the senior management pay, grading and terms and conditions.

The report provided information in relation to the recruitment and retention issues being faced by the Council, re-evaluation of senior jobs, the comparison of current pay to that being paid by other Councils considering size of Council and where possible, complexity of role/size of management structure. The report sought to make permanent the interim responsibilities that Heads of Service had been operating with since the further reduction in the senior management team in 2006 when 3 Heads of Service departed. It also sought an extension of the pay and grading scheme to incorporate all officers currently employed under the NJC Scheme for Local Government Employees. It was noted that the proposals not only completed the final phase of the Job Evaluation/Single Status exercise but also enhanced the Council's approach to succession planning.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. A revised pay and grading structure for Heads of Service as detailed in the report be approved and that officers be assimilated to the revised structure in accordance with the outcome of the Hay Job Evaluation process.
2. An extension to the agreed pay and grading structure for senior officers falling within National Joint Council terms and conditions of employment for Local Government Employees, who have been evaluated under the Hay Job Evaluation Scheme as detailed in the report, be approved.
3. The revised pay structure for those members of the Corporate Management Team not included in recommendation (1) above be approved.
4. Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Social Inclusion and the Director of Law & Democracy, in respect of minor amendments to the terms and conditions of employees employed under Chief Officers Conditions of Service in line with amendments already agreed for other Council employees under the Single Status Agreement.
5. Delegated powers be given to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Social Inclusion and the Director of Law and Democracy to determine any amendments to the pay and grading structures in respect of Heads of Service and Senior officers

employed under the NJC Conditions of Service following the conclusion of Trades Union consultations.