

## **Cabinet**

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Monday, 21st July, 2008.

**Present:** Cllr Ken Lupton (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Alex Cunningham, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

**Officers:** H Dean (ACE); N Schneider, J McCann, R Poundford, M Clifford, S Daniels, T Connor, C Snowdon, M Batty (DNS); J Danks (RES); A Baxter, J Morrison, R Hill (CESC); D Bond, N Hart, S Johnson (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Bill Woodhead; Mr F W Hayes (Chairman, Standards Committee)

**Apologies:** Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy

### **CAB 48/08**      **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Coleman, Cook and Mrs Rigg declared personal/non-prejudicial interests in the item entitled Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as they were nominated to one of the vacant governor positions referred to in the report.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest in the item entitled Reorganisation of Education For Children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) as a member of a governing body.

Councillors Cook, Cunningham and Nelson declared personal/non-prejudicial interests in the item entitled A Strategy For Change for Building Schools For The Future (BSF) as they were members of governing bodies referred to in the report.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest in the item entitled Minutes of Various Bodies as he was a board member on St. Ann's Development Board.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal/non-prejudicial interest in the item entitled Performance and Finance Report Year End 31 March 2008 as he was a member on the Tristar Board.

### **CAB 49/08**      **Minutes of the meetings held on 22 May 2008 and 19 June 2008**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 May 2008 and 19 June 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **CAB 50/08**      **Environment Select Committee (Task & Finish Group)-Review of Rats & Pigeons**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group that had been examining the extent to which the Borough was affected by high numbers of both rats and pigeons, and what necessary measures could be carried out, in isolation or in partnership, by both the Council, the public, and the business/retail sector to help reduce the numbers of both.

It was explained that when reviewing the evidence, members considered the need for greater public and commercial awareness of factors that influenced the number of rats and pigeons. The Group made recommendations in order to achieve a reduction in numbers of both; at the same time as increasing awareness of the Council's policy to control such problems and maintain the cleanliness of the Borough and to contribute to promotion of both the Borough and its Town Centres as enjoyable places to visit and shop.

Members of Cabinet discussed Stockton News in terms of it not being distributed throughout the full borough. It was requested that officers look into the distribution.

RESOLVED that:

1. A public awareness campaign be conducted via Stockton News, the Council's website and other Council information outlets advising of the sensible action that should be taken (both do's and don'ts) so as to eliminate potential food sources likely to encourage rats.

The availability of the free service offered to all domestic properties, and the service offered to commercial properties, be similarly highlighted as part of the campaign.

2. The Corporate Director of Resources be requested to look into current spend across the Council on pest control services and the opportunities to maximise efficiencies and 'invest to save' opportunities, particularly in relation to responsibilities for open public land.

3. In order to minimise the potential for the urban landscape to attract both rats and litter, the Environmental Health Service should continue to be consulted on planning applications containing proposed shrub beds, and the service should also provide input into the design stage of major projects and the guidance contained within the Local Development Framework.

4. The benefits of the connectivity of the two relevant IT systems be acknowledged and the Environmental Health Manager build into Service Improvement Planning the acquisition of the appropriate software necessary to achieve greater connectivity between use of the Council's FLARE and GIS systems, so as to produce a higher level of management information that more accurately records specific trends regarding reported pest control problems.

5. Through consultation with the Environmental Health Manager, the Council's Waste Implementation Plan should reflect the need to ensure that the advice provided regarding, and proposed methods of, food waste disposal and home composting did not encourage and provide food sources to rodents; and that the supply of suitable compost unit bases be further investigated by a Sub Group established by the Urban Environment Task Group (UETG).

6. An initial public and commercial awareness campaign be initiated via Stockton News, the Council's website, the various Retail Fora highlighting the Council's wish to tackle pigeon infestation in the Borough, targeted initially via a pilot exercise within Stockton Town Centre, through measures designed to:-

- Reduce food availability;
- Prevent pigeon roosting sites as far as possible;
- Raise awareness via high profile publicity/education of the causes of pigeon infestation (i.e. available food sources and areas for harbourage) and the detrimental effects caused by feeding pigeons human food;
- Enforce prohibition;

and that successful measures were then extended to the remaining Borough Town Centres following the trial period.

7. As part of the awareness raising campaign suggested in Recommendation 6, the views of both the public and the retail sector be sought through a consultation exercise to ascertain their support for any proposed action to be taken aimed at reducing the number of pigeons within Stockton Town Centre in the first instance.

8. Via the suggested Retail Fora (e.g Stockton Town Centre Retail Forum; Town Centre Managers Newsletter, Chamber of Commerce Business Forum) the retail sector be advised of the available support offered by the Council's Pest Control Service regards measures that could be implemented to prevent harbourage of pigeons on their properties, including proofing measures, securing of property against roosting etc, and they be encouraged to identify any retail properties requiring prevention works, including derelict properties providing harbourage.

9. As an incentive to the retail sectors involvement in measures to reduce pigeon infestation, the Council's Environmental Health Manager gave consideration to initial concessions being offered to retailers on the cost of implementing proofing measures on their buildings, and issue appropriate advice regarding necessary measures to be carried out.

10. The Council's Land & Property Manager, in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager, be requested to consider appropriate action that could be taken to deter pigeon roosting on Council buildings; such as the suitability of proofing measures being added where appropriate.

11. As part of the consideration of the detailed design stage of proposed retail developments dialogue be entered into between developers, Planning and Environmental Health so as to seek to remove the potential for design features to encourage pigeon harbourage.

12. A Sub Group be established by the Urban Environment Task Group with responsibility to incorporate into its work programme consideration of the following measures and their cost; and that they form part of an agreed Action Plan to be built into future Service Improvement Planning to assist this Task & Finish Group's aim in achieving a reduction in pigeon numbers in Stockton Town Centre as part of an initial pilot exercise:-

- Use of Prohibitive Signs advising the public not to feed the pigeons/warning of enforcement action;
- Media campaign utilising all available advertising outlets, bus shelters, billboards, retail premises, sandwich bags etc, promoting the theme of encouraging the public not to feed the pigeons;

- Advice/Enforcement action towards retail sector regards storage of commercial food waste;
- Target collection of litter bins in the Town Centre to reduce build up of food waste likely to attract pigeon/vermin, and consider number and siting of bins to ensure that they are sited in appropriate locations (such as outside of fast food outlets) ;
- Involvement of Neighbourhood Enforcement Team in offering advice/enforcement to public regards dissuading them from feeding pigeons/dropping food waste;
- Engagement of the retail sector in all measures designed to improve the Town Centre environmental street scene;
- Enforcement action to be taken with regard to properties left derelict and prone to attract pigeon/vermin;
- Commissioning of a DVD, based on the example provided by Liverpool City Council, as a method of engagement to educate the public, schools, community groups etc regarding the aims of the Council's campaign to discourage the feeding of pigeons, and the DVD be promoted on the Castlegate Centre display screen; hosted as a download on the Council's website, and circulated to schools/community groups as appropriate;
- The proposed use of raptor methods, subject to the outcome of the proposed consultation, be approved and be funded from the campaign budget, as a measure towards pigeon control.

13. A campaign to reduce pigeon numbers be built into future Pest Control Service Improvement Planning and if appropriate any funding implications be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan process.

14. The Council's website content be reviewed to include the main themes of the campaign, which offered appropriate advice and requesting on line comment from the public regarding areas affected by pigeon infestation.

15. That the Council commit to a campaign to achieve a sustainable 50% reduction in pigeon numbers in Stockton Town Centre within three years.

16. The success of the campaign be monitored by the Sub Group established by the Urban Environment Task Group and results provided on an annual basis to the Environment Select Committee.

**CAB  
51/08**      **Wastes Management and Recycling**

Consideration was given to a report on the findings and recommendations from the Environment Select Committee's scrutiny review of Wastes Management and Recycling and presented the proposed plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

It was explained that Waste Management and Recycling was identified as a priority issue for review by the Scrutiny Liaison Forum in 2007, due to a number of key national and local developments including the publication of the Waste Strategy for England and the development of the Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy.

Previously, a comprehensive scrutiny review of waste management had taken place during 2004/05, which identified further work to be undertaken, including a

review of the outcome of the kerbside plastics and cardboard recycling trial, which made the review timely to complete.

The overall aim of the scrutiny review was to achieve real improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of Stockton's waste collection and disposal services and to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill sites, whilst maintaining or improving customer satisfaction with the service.

Members of Cabinet were informed that the main recommendations of the scrutiny review were to continue to provide a weekly waste collection service together with a fortnightly recycling collection service with the range of materials collected from the kerbside being extended to include plastics and cardboard.

Members felt that significant change was required if the authority was to achieve the new government targets set for 2010 and beyond.

In addition to NI 191, the joint waste management strategy was expected to set targets to reduce the amount of household waste produced per head of population.

The implementation of the recommendations arising from the Environment Select Committee would undoubtedly support the Council's aim of bridging the gap between current recycling levels and national targets, whilst maintaining a first class service not generally provided across the country. The collection of new recycling materials along with a comprehensive programme of education and marketing campaigns, supported by targeted enforcement and the removal of side waste / multiple wheeled bin collections would have a positive impact upon the Council's overall recycling rates. Significant public support existed for the introduction of a plastic and cardboard recycling service, which was reflected in very high customer satisfaction ratings during the trial. A comprehensive analysis of the impact of a Borough wide service would be undertaken 12 months following the introduction of the final phase.

Members of Cabinet requested that officers produce and circulate to all Members a timetable for the implementation, including information on which streets in the borough fall into each phase of the implementation.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The revised staffing establishment at Appendix 2 of the report be approved.
2. The additional resource allocation detailed within the financial appraisal at Appendix 3 of the report be approved and included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as identified in paragraph 20.
3. The continuation of the popular weekly refuse collection service, in conjunction with a wide selection of eight recyclable items collected at the kerbside. This level of service is not generally enjoyed in most parts of the country today be noted.
4. A comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Borough-wide service be undertaken 12 months after the introduction of the final phase and the results reported to Cabinet.

**CAB  
52/08**

## **The Regeneration and Development of Stockton's Parks**

Consideration was given to a report on the Regeneration and Development of Stockton's Parks. In September 2007 Cabinet approved the commitment of £500,000 capital funding towards the regeneration of four key parks in the Borough:

- John Whitehead Park (Billingham)
- Newham Grange Park (Stockton)
- Romano Park (Ingleby Barwick)
- Wynyard Woodland Park (Thorpe Thewles)

The report summarised progress made to date, including consultation work, details of external funding secured, and project delivery. The report outlined the next stages in the development and delivery of the schemes, including a breakdown of estimated project costs and information on external funding.

The report also provided a summary of four other current or potential schemes which had not been funded directly through the above £500,000 capital allocation:

- Village Park (Thornaby)
- Harewood Pleasure Gardens (Thornaby)
- Preston Park and Hall
- River Tees Park

Finally reference was made to three externally funded initiatives which would compliment and add value to the park regeneration programme:

- Play Builder
- Active Outdoors
- Playing Out

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. Officers be authorised to enter into initial negotiations with landowners within the River Tees corridor with a view to reporting back to Cabinet at a later date on the opportunities and potential costs of land acquisition, as part of a wider report on the proposed development of a River Tees Park.
3. A programme of publicity be devised to highlight the major investments in the borough's parks and play areas.

**CAB  
53/08**

## **Personalisation of Services - Update**

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the requirements of the government concordat "Putting People First", published in December 2007, which had signalled a transformation in the delivery of adult social care based on the personalisation of services for adults and older people.

The report noted that “Putting People First – A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social care” established a collaborative approach between central and local government, the sector’s professional leadership, providers and the regulator. It signalled that the Department of Health wanted to maximise the role of communities in supporting care but also deliver support tailored to the individual. Personalisation and early intervention were seen as key issues for the whole of local government and not just for adult social care.

It was explained that central to this reform was local authority leadership and partnership working with the local NHS, other statutory agencies, third and independent sector organisations, users, carers and the wider community. It was explained that the expectation was that there would be shared outcomes designed to ensure that, irrespective of illness and disability people were supported to:

- Live independently;
- Stay healthy, recover quickly from illness;
- Exercise the maximum control over their own lives;
- Sustain family units and avoid children taking on inappropriate caring roles;
- Participate as active and equal citizens;
- Have best quality of life; and
- Retain maximum dignity and respect.

In practice this meant ensuring that universal information, advice and advocacy service for people needing services and their carers were available regardless of eligibility. This could be achieved via the development of a “first stop shop” which dealt with issues and queries in an accessible manner and that connected with other partners such as the Pensions Agency or the voluntary sector.

The pilot work found that giving individuals a personal budget, either through self assessment or being assessed, had offered individuals greater choice and control over how they wanted to spend the money and greater satisfaction with their outcomes. To take forward personal budgets the systems and processes would need to change to ensure appropriate safeguards were in place to protect vulnerable adults and systems were in place to ensure that there was no financial abuse. There needed to be detailed work to assess how the resource allocation would function and how outcomes would be monitored. The workforce needed to support and develop personalisation, however roles would change and existing services would change from the way they were provided.

In order to provide more detail about Personalisation an information session had been scheduled on 2 September 2008 for Councillors. Additional sessions with providers and workforce had also been planned.

To enable Personalisation to be implemented a Social Care Reform Grant had been awarded, which offered an opportunity to focus plans on how services needed to be developed to address this agenda. The allocation for year one was £289,000 which would be focused around two areas;

- The development of a team to provide support and expertise for this programme, and
- New service and workforce development.

Members of Cabinet were advised that a Personalisation Manager was being recruited, who would act as a change agent, facilitating the necessary developments in the processes, systems and workforce. The remaining funding had been used to invest in new services that addressed the principles of personalisation and support the workforce changes. This included investment into additional support capacity for direct payments and individual budgets, the “Brighter Futures” scheme for young adults with learning disabilities and the development of alternatives to day services across adult groups.

Recognising the wide-ranging nature of the programme it had been agreed that the Adult Vision would be refreshed to take into account the requirements of Putting People First. The Adult Care Management Team overseen the implementation of the programme and would review progress against the Project Initiation Document. A draft Project Initiation Document had been developed and the Personalisation approach would be subject to risk assessment and project controls. A Project Board was being developed.

RESOLVED that:

1. The direction of travel be noted and the principles of personalising social care be supported.
2. The investment approach be agreed.
3. The project management approach be agreed.

**CAB  
54/08**

### **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:

Billingham Campus School and Art College – Mr I Wright and Mr R McCall  
Billingham South Primary School - Cllr J O’Donnell  
Blakeston School and Community Sports College - Cllr Mrs A Cains  
Bowesfield Primary School - Mr C Coombs and Ms J McGee  
Conyers School, Maths and Computing Specialist College -Mrs J Coleman  
Durham Lane Primary School - Cllr Mrs M Rigg  
Hardwick Primary School - Cllr W Noble  
Hartburn Primary School - Mrs J Appleby  
Kirklevington Primary School - Cllr Mrs J Beaumont  
Levendale Primary School - Mr D Turner  
Norton Primary School - Cllr R Cook  
Oxbridge Lane Primary School -Mrs C McHale  
Pentland Primary School - Cllr M Stoker  
Preston Primary School - Mrs A MacKie  
Rosebrook Primary School - Cllr J Beall, Cllr A Cains and Mrs J Appleby  
St. Bede’s Catholic Primary School - Miss M Galloway



St. Patrick's RC Primary School, Thornaby - Mr G Wilson  
The Norton School Humanities College - Cllr M Frankland and Mr R Stephenson  
The Oak Tree Primary School - Cllr P Baker and Mr R Stephenson  
Tilery Primary School - Cllr D Coleman and Mr C Coombs

**CAB 55/08 Reorganisation of Education For Children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)**

Consideration was given to a report on the reorganisation of education for children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). Following consultation with interested parties, Cabinet had agreed the publication of a Statutory Notice proposing that King Edwin School be closed on 31st August 2008 and the remaining students be transferred to the roll of Westlands School from 1st September. The notice was published on 3rd May. No statutory objections were received in the six-week period following publication. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 it fell to Cabinet to determine the proposal.

It was explained that the rationale for the proposal agreed by Members in April was that concentrating provision for all students with BESD on a single site would give all of them access to a greater number of specialist staff offering a wider range of curriculum options. Individual learning programmes would be developed to enable each student to reach his or her full potential. Students and staff would benefit from the growing strength of the Stockton Borough First Federation.

Before reaching a decision on the proposal, Members were required to have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. The body of the report included comment on the elements of the guidance that were relevant to the proposal. The full guidance was available in the Members' Library.

Before the Education and Inspections Act came into force in 2007, all decisions on school organisation proposals after the publication of a Statutory Notice were delegated to the Corporate Director CESC in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Executive Function 365). The present proposal fell to Cabinet because no decision to delegate the function under the new law had been made. Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council an amendment to the Constitution to restore delegation of these decisions to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

RESOLVED that King Edwin School be discontinued on 31 August 2008 and the remaining students transferred to the roll of Westlands School;

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the Constitution be amended by deleting Executive Function 365 (a) and 365 (b) and inserting the following:**

**a. "To publish, consider, approve and implement any proposals under Sections 7, 15 or 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for the establishment, alteration and discontinuance of school premises, save and except where paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 or 15 of Schedule 2 of the Act apply and, as a result, any proposals are required to be referred to the adjudicator.**

**b. Either to withdraw, or to refer to the adjudicator any proposals referred to in (a), where any of the said paragraphs 11 to 15 inclusively apply.” It is recommended that both these functions (a) and (b) be delegated to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.**

**CAB  
56/08**

### **A Strategy For Change for Building Schools For The Future (BSF)**

Members were reminded that on 11 February Cabinet had authorised officers to prepare a draft Strategy for Change Part 1 (SfC1) for discussion with government agencies. Those discussions led to a Remit Meeting on 5th June. This meeting marked the formal entry of Stockton-on-Tees into the national BSF programme. It was explained that a final version of SfC1 had to be submitted to government within eight weeks of the Remit Meeting (i.e. by 31st July 2008).

The first draft SfC1 included preferred options for school organisation following consultation in autumn 2007. Cabinet was provided with the latest draft SfC1, which reflected the outcome of discussions with government agencies over many weeks. Cabinet noted proposed changes from the options it had agreed in February:

- an increase in the capacity of All Saints School to 900 places rather than to 750
- a reduction in the capacity of Conyers School to 900 places rather than to 1050
- the Stockton Academy to have 1050 places rather than 900
- a 900-place Academy to replace Thornaby Community School
- a possible federation on three sites to retain distinctive Catholic education in Billingham, Stockton and Thornaby
- a possible federation of Northfield and Campus schools rather than an Academy in Billingham.

A leaflet summarising these proposals was widely distributed through schools and nurseries and placed on the Council website. The draft SfC1 was also published on the website and made available at six drop-in sessions held at public venues around the borough. A total of 24 people attended those sessions. 22 of these were parents or school governors with specific questions about the impact of BSF on their children or schools. One other was a Ward Councillor and the other represented a company with a potential interest in contracting work.

Members were reminded that the proposals in the Strategy for Change did not have the status of formal school organisation proposals. Any change such as establishing a new school or closing an existing school had to follow a statutory process of consultation and decision-making laid down in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A decision by Cabinet to authorise the submission of SfC1 did not commit the Authority to any of the changes described in that document.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Strategy for Change Part 1 be submitted to government for formal assessment.

## **Travellers Site Selection - Update**

Consideration was given to a report that presented an update on the actions that had arisen from the Review of Traveller Transit Site Selection undertaken by the Housing and Community Safety Committee on 14 February 2008.

It was explained that following a marked increase in Traveller activity within the Borough and the continued cost of dealing with unauthorised encampments, Cabinet had agreed to establish a Travellers Transit Site subject to the availability of 100% Government grant funding. In February 2008 Cabinet received a report from the Housing and Community Safety Committee which concluded that there were no suitable locations for a travellers site within Council ownership and resolved that further work was required to identify alternative sites, including any not in Council ownership, which met the criteria for the funding.

The Housing and Community Safety Committee report also outlined that a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) had been commissioned jointly with the other four Tees Valley Authorities. A draft report was received from GTAA in March 2008, which included a number of assumptions, and ongoing discussions were being held between Local Authorities and the consultants to clarify. Revised assumptions had been agreed and the consultants were subsequently remodelling the need for existing and future provision. This provision was being overseen by the Tees Valley Heads of Housing Group.

Members were informed that timescales for the current round of Gypsy & Travellers Site Grant required submission of an application by the end of July 2008, and the criteria which applications would be considered against were noted. It was explained that the identification of suitable sites had proved difficult, and while Land and Property staff had reviewed and considered a number of sites outside of Council ownership, consideration of these sites against the criteria for funding would mean they would be unlikely to be appropriate. Only one potentially suitable site where the owners were willing to discuss disposing of their interest for this purpose has been found. However, this was in the same geographical area as the site deemed unsuitable by the Scrutiny Review (Bowesfield Lane).

It was explained that work was ongoing investigating alternatives. This included consultation with all Members on potential sites in their Ward and also commissioning Lamb & Edge to undertake a further search.

Work was also underway to draw up proposals for refurbishment of the Council's existing travellers' site at Mount Pleasant Grange. It was anticipated that the total value of the proposal would be of the order of £250,000 to £300,000, based on works to bring all pitches up to the 'decent standard' for Council housing, improved perimeter security for the site and an additional pitch.

**RESOLVED** that an application for building refurbishment works at the Council's existing site be submitted and a further report into the provision of an additional traveller site be received in autumn 2008 following receipt of a needs assessment report and further site considerations.

**CAB  
58/08**      **Minutes of Various Bodies**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of Area Partnership Boards and Tees Valley Living Board.

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

Tees Valley Living Board 13th March 2008  
Tees Valley Living Board 8th May 2008  
The Billingham Partnership 2nd June 2008  
Western Area Partnership 19th May 2008  
St Ann's Development Board 3rd April 2008  
St Ann's Development Board 5th May 2008

**CAB  
59/08**      **Performance and Finance Report Year End 31 March 2008**

Cabinet considered a report that outlined the Council's performance and financial position for the period Quarter 4, January to March 2008 and year end outturn, providing details of performance against targets and improvement trends. The report included the linkages between finance and performance, general fund balances, medium term financial and capital plan position. Also included was performance against Council Plan objectives, Service Improvement Plan progress, Corporate Basket of key performance indicators, Gershon Efficiency Savings, complaints and commendations, consultation and sharing of good practice. Part 1 of the report focused on the Council's financial position and part 2 detailed performance outturn.

Members were provided with a table detailing the current MTFP position of each service. This was compared to the projected position, based on financial information to the end of December, as reported to Cabinet on 21st February, 2008. The main reasons for any changes were provided to members.

Cabinet was reminded that the Council's current policy was to hold 3% of General Fund expenditure as balances (this equated to £7.6 million at 1st April 2008). In the report to Cabinet in February the forecast level of working balances was reported as £13.37 million with £5.8 million utilised as part of the 2008/09 budget setting process. The working capital position had now improved to £15.0 million by the year-end and the position on working capital as at 1st April, 2008, was £9.181 million equivalent to 3.6% of our 2008/09 Net Budget Requirement. It was explained that at this time, the Council was still facing a number of pressures, including those within Waste and Housing Options, there was still uncertainty around the funding of BSF and the Council was not expecting significant changes in the level of resources given by the government. As a result, it was suggested that, at this time, the Council should not utilise balances and this position be reviewed on a quarterly basis, as part of the updates on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

It was explained that the Council had created 3 new earmarked reserves at the year end to fund specific pressures arising within Council service areas. The reserves had been created to develop the SAFFRON system (£229,000) with Development and Neighbourhood Services, to support the ICT Infrastructure

Review (£180,000) within Resources and a Standards Fund reserve generated from grant received under the Government Standards Fund Programme to fund services on behalf of children and young people (£622,000).

Members were provided with a table outlining the Capital budget for 2007/08.

The capital budget had been amended to reflect a reduction to the Parkfield re-development programme (£967,000), Heritage Lottery Grant (£112,000) associated with final design of the Holy Trinity Church Scheme, which had previously been approved, and a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs grant (£100,000) received to fund the creation of Clarences Kick About Area.

The movement from the approved budget includes a reduced programme and additional financed expenditure of £(1,865,000), re-profiling of approved expenditure of £(5,010,000) and re-profiling of ring-fenced resources of £(1,394,000). The major reasons for the movements were detailed for Members.

It was explained that as part of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management activity, there was a requirement for the Treasury Management Annual Report to be presented to Council for approval. A copy of the report was attached at for Members attention.

Members continued consideration of the report and were reminded that the Council Plan set out the overall ambitions and priorities of the Council and detailed the way ahead through a series of specific objectives and targets the Council aimed to achieve. Information provided showed good progress had been made towards the achievement and delivery of objectives within the council plan with 77% of objectives either achieved or on track to be achieved. Full details of progress against each objective was provided with an analysis of progress against each Community Strategy theme..

The Corporate Basket for 2007/08 held 95 of the council's key measures including Best Value Performance Indicators, Performance Assessment Framework measures (PAF) and local indicators. Outturn results showed good levels of achievement against targets. Of the 95 measures, 80% of targets were achieved with 78% showing an improvement trend from the same period last year.

Key priorities for the community were detailed within the 5 themes of the Community Strategy 2005 – 2008. The Council Plan had an additional theme for organisational development, named Corporate Health. Members were provided with details of performance, financial and risk related issues against each of the Community Strategy themes of:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Adults
- Safer Communities
- Liveability
- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Corporate Health

**RECOMMENDED to Council that:-**

1. the overall report be noted.
2. the revised MTFP be noted.
3. the level of working balances be noted and retained at £9.2 million
4. the creation of specific reserves as detailed be approved.
5. the re-profiled approved capital expenditure of (£5,010,000), a reduced programme and additional financed expenditure of (£1,865,000) and a re-profiling of ring-fenced resources of (£1,394,000) be approved.
6. Members approve the actual 2007/08 Prudential Indicators.
7. the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2007/08 be noted.

**CAB  
60/08**      **Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer - 2007/08**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report for 2007/08.

It was explained that the production of annual reports was an essential part of the Council's performance monitoring, reporting and planning procedures. Monitoring, planning and reviewing the work of the Monitoring Officer should equally therefore include an annual reporting process as best practice.

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the Monitoring Officer's third Annual Report (for 2007/08).

The purpose of the Report was not only to provide an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer in the past year, but also to identify and promote examples of best practice and to provide an opportunity to review and learn from experience. The Report therefore set out the Monitoring Officer's Statutory responsibilities, summarised how they had been discharged during 2007/08 and drew attention to those issues that would require attention in the year ahead.

Consultation on the Report had previously taken place with the relevant Cabinet Member; the Head of Legal Services as Deputy Monitoring Officer; the Head of Democratic Services; the Corporate Governance Group; the Corporate Management Team; the Standards Committee and the Audit Committee. It was noted that once agreed, the Report would also be placed on the intranet and the internet for the attention of all Members/Officers. A hard copy would, in addition be made available to each member of the Standards Committee.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report be approved.**

**CAB  
61/08**      **Annual Report of the Standards Committee - 2007/08**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2007/08. The Chair of the Standards Committee was in

attendance at the meeting and presented the report to Cabinet alongside the Monitoring Officer.

It was explained that the production of annual reports was an essential part of the Council's performance monitoring, reporting and planning procedures. Monitoring, planning and reviewing the work of the Standards Committee should equally therefore include an annual reporting process as best practice.

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the Committee's third Annual Report (for 2007/08).

The purpose of the Report was not only to provide an overview of the work of the Committee in the past year, but also to identify and promote examples of best practice and to provide an opportunity to review and learn from experience. The Report therefore set out the Committee's Statutory responsibilities, summarised how they had been discharged during 2007/08 and drew attention to those issues that would require attention in the year ahead.

Consultation on the Report had previously taken place with the relevant Cabinet Member; the Head of Legal Services as Deputy Monitoring Officer; the Head of Democratic Services; the Corporate Governance Group; the Corporate Management Team; and the Audit Committee. It was noted that once agreed, the Report would also be placed on the intranet and the internet for the attention of all Members/Officers. A hard copy would, in addition be made available to each member of the Standards Committee.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the Standards Committee's Annual Report be approved.**

**CAB  
62/08**

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

It was explained that the SHLAA was a technical exercise to support the development of housing policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF). In particular, it informed the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Regeneration DPD. To support the new policy approach to housing, the PPS3 "daughter document" Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance required a new approach to assessing housing land availability. The fundamental aim of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was to identify the capacity of a district to accommodate new housing development over the plan period.

The SHLAA exercise had involved the production of report setting out the methodology and the assessment findings together with associated appendices. It was important to consult publicly on this document and it was considered that there were exceptional circumstances that warrant authorization to do so being conferred by Cabinet. It was noted that public consultation was proposed the three-week period Monday 28th July to Friday 15th August 2008.

Members of Cabinet were provided with a copy of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment document.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment be endorsed for public consultation for the three-week period Monday 28th July to Friday 15th August 2008
3. The making of minor changes to the report of an editorial nature be delegated to officers.
4. The proposal of the Corporate Director, Development and Neighbourhood Services, to take a decision to approve the draft SHLAA for public consultation for the three-week period Monday 28th July to Friday 15th August 2008, be endorsed.
5. The making of any changes to the report that may be considered necessary in the light of the public consultation be delegated to officers.