

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 6th November, 2008.

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

Officers: N Schneider, H Dean (CE); J Danks, D Hurwood (RES); M Robinson, J McCann, J Nixon, C Straughan (DNS); J Humphreys, J Morrison, R Kench, E Shassere, P Seller, J Hegarty (CESC); D E Bond, M Waggott, P K Bell, P J Mennear, R MacGregor (LD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Cherrett (Vice Chair of Housing and Community Safety Select Committee), Cllr Mrs Rigg (Chair of Environment Select Committee, Cllr Beall and Cllr Narroway; 8 Members of Homes for the Future Tenants Group.

Apologies: None.

CAB Declarations of Interest **94/08**

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Reorganisation of Secondary Schools in Billingham as she was a Member of Billingham Town Council.

Councillor Lupton declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Reorganisation of Secondary Schools in Billingham as he was a friend of a teacher at one of the schools involved in the reorganisation.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as she was a school governor at Mill Lane School.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as he was a school governor at Mill Lane School.

Councillor Lupton declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as he had a close association with both applicants at Yarm Primary School and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as she had a close association with both applicants at Yarm Primary School and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Mrs Womphrey declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as she had a close association with both applicants at Yarm Primary School and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Laing declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies as he had a close association with both applicants at Yarm Primary School and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Housing and Community Safety Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Registered Social Landlords as he was a member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 - Housing Futures (Options for Future Investment) as he was a member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Mrs Cherrett declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Housing and Community Safety Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Registered Social Landlords as she was a member of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Mrs Cherrett declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 - Housing Futures (Options for Future Investment) as she was a member of Tristar Homes Board.

CAB 95/08 Minutes of the meetings held on 11 September 2008 and 9 October 2008

The minutes of the meetings held on 11th September 2008 and 9th October 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CAB 96/08 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Cabinet was provided with a concise summary of the first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) completed in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) which had placed a duty on Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Local Authorities to work together to describe the health, wellbeing and care needs of the populations they served. It was explained that the JSNA also comprised a detailed technical document which set out the range of statistical data and other information that had been collated and analysed to inform the key needs and priorities referred to in the concise summary document.

RESOLVED that the JSNA summary be received and its linkage to the key strategies and plans that support delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy be noted.

CAB 97/08 Youth Cafe Developments

Cabinet considered a report relating to Youth Café Developments.

In June 2006, Cabinet approved the first phase of Youth Café Developments. This saw the opening of the "Chill Zone" in what was the Connexions One-Stop-Shop on Bishopton Lane, Stockton-on-Tees.

A further report to Cabinet in October 2007 detailing proposals for further development of Youth Café Provision was approved. The report recommended support for developments in Billingham, Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick.

Cabinet was provided with a summary of the work carried out in relation to the three sites and Cabinet's approval was sought for possible future developments.

It was explained that capital funding was available for developing the proposals through the government's Youth Capital Funding Programme. It was a ring-fenced grant and was available over the next three years to March 2011. It was noted that grant monies had to be spent within year and only 5% was able to be rolled forward to future years.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress on the developments of the Youth Cafes in Billingham and Thornaby be noted.
2. The progress on efforts to identify an appropriate site for a Youth Café development in Ingleby Barwick be noted.
3. Cabinet to confirm the development of further Youth Café provision within the North Stockton Integrated Service Area, and agree delegated approval to proceed with lead Cabinet member consultation.

**CAB
98/08**

Reorganisation of Secondary Schools in Billingham

Consideration was given to a report on the reorganisation of secondary schools in Billingham.

The report outlined that the projected decline in the number of students attending secondary schools in Billingham was such that it would become impossible to sustain three separate schools. The impact of falling rolls had affected Billingham Campus School most severely, putting its viability beyond 2014 in doubt. The Authority would be required to address this issue in the second part of the Building Schools for the Future Strategy for Change to be submitted to government in December 2008.

Initial consultation had taken place on a possible merger of Billingham Campus and Northfield schools in September 2009. The merged school would operate on two sites for at least five years. Around 2014 the decline in student numbers would enable all the students to be accommodated on one site. This was expected to coincide with the availability of BSF funding to remodel the Northfield buildings.

Split-site operation would allow all present Campus students to remain on their present site for the whole of their secondary school career. Action was planned to mitigate the impact of the merger on school staff.

The merger proposal was supported by the two school governing bodies. Issues raised during the consultation process were summarised in this report.

A draft Statutory Public Notice was attached to the report.

A consultation paper was distributed through all the primary and secondary

schools in Billingham. A copy of the consultation paper was attached to the report. It was published on the Council website and made available in the two Billingham public libraries. Comments were invited by letter or email. Meetings took place at the two schools for parents, students, staff and members of the community. Council officers also attended meetings of the governing bodies of Billingham Campus, Northfield and St Michael's schools, the Stockton-on-Tees Children's Trust Board, the Billingham Partnership and Billingham Town Council. The views expressed in consultation were summarised within the report.

In total 22 emails were received from parents or community members. These were reproduced in full and attached to the report. Notes were taken by staff of Campus and Northfield schools at meetings for parents. These were not included with the report but had been made available for members.

The Council as local education authority had a strategic planning and commissioning role. Issues arising from consultation that related to the local authority role were included within the report. The internal management of schools, including staffing, the curriculum and class organisation were the responsibility of school governing bodies. Those issues were also included in the report.

RESOLVED that a Statutory Public Notice be issued describing a proposal to:-

1. Discontinue Billingham Campus School with effect from 31st August 2009, and
2. Enlarge Northfield School from 1,120 to 1,800 places to encompass the site and buildings of Billingham Campus School with effect from 1st September 2009.

**CAB
99/08**

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:

Hardwick Primary School – Mr R Stephenson

Mill Lane Primary School – Jean Oliver

Yarm Primary School – Councillor Mrs Simpson

**CAB
100/08**

Scrutiny Review of Registered Social Landlords

Cabinet considered a report that presented the findings of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee following a review of Registered Social Landlords (commonly known as Housing Associations) and their relationship with the Council. It was explained that the review covered a range of issues including the operational relationship with the Council, local partnership

arrangements, RSLs as regeneration partners, trends within the sector, and the future plans of RSLs.

RESOLVED that:-

1. that the communication exchange between RSL partners and the local authority be improved by:

- a) drafting a protocol which the Council should encourage RSLs to use when communicating with Members, and for it to include reference to providing appropriate ward members with key RSL contact details (e.g. patch managers/area managers) on an annual basis and request that these contacts are kept up to date,
- b) including this up to date information in the induction packs of new Members as appropriate;
- c) providing all RSLs with general information regarding the role/remit of 'ward councillors' as a means of general awareness raising of their roles within the local community and request this information is shared with their front line housing staff;
- d) providing RSLs with key contact details including ward members and appropriate Council Officers on an annual basis, and encouraging RSL officers based within a local area to informally meet with the appropriate ward members as a matter of course;
- e) SBC Housing Service advising ward members on the strategic role of the LA in dealing with complaints relating to RSLs.

2. that steps be taken to ensure all partner RSLs are active partners in the LSP, in particular, the thematic Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership.

3. a) that the Council create a framework of RSLs who wish to develop within the Borough and this framework be used to identify those RSLs capable of working with the Council to secure future funding, and to assist private developers to identify suitable RSLs to work with them on the deliverability of affordable housing on s106 sites.

b) that the criteria for RSLs on the framework include:

- their role as developing organisations;
- their role as a key local authority strategic partner in order to support agendas including homelessness, training and employment, and the physical and social regeneration of the Borough, for example by attendance at the Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership;
- the standards expected in terms of service and presence within Neighbourhoods.

c) that the criteria and membership of the framework be regularly reviewed, and an annual update be reported to Housing and Community Safety Select Committee.

4. that in order to ensure that non-developing RSLs are 'good landlords', promote tenant involvement, participate in community involvement, and that they attend the Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership, the Council should undertake an annual review, taking into account the views of tenants/Members/key stakeholders including relevant SBC services, and to work with appropriate regulatory bodies should this be necessary following the

review. The results of this review should be reported to Housing and Community Safety Select Committee.

5. that following recommendations 3) and 4), the Council evaluate the work undertaken by RSLs specifically in relation to their 'community investment funds/activity' on an annual basis and to share best practice between partner RSLs and other housing providers, using the meetings of the Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership.

6. that in relation to planning obligations, building on the policy work already undertaken as part of the LDF process, officers of Housing and Planning Services (and other services as appropriate) should undertake joint work or training as deemed appropriate by the Heads of Housing and Planning Services to examine best practice in order to further develop experience and expertise when negotiating s106 agreements that contain provision for affordable housing, in order to promote greater understanding of the opportunities and constraints contained within and to maximise the number of units delivered through this method, and that the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee should receive an annual report stating what joint work or training has been completed.

7.a) that Members of the Housing and Community Select Committee (and all Members where appropriate) be provided with timely information relating to the 'housing market' (including for example key Government announcements and projects initiated within the Borough).

b) that the Housing Service actively seeks to bid for/secure resources to deliver new housing initiatives (for example 'Mortgage Rescue Packages').

**CAB
101/08 Scrutiny Review of Customer First**

Cabinet considered a report that presented the findings of the Environment Select Committee following a review of Customer First.

It was explained that the Committee undertook an assessment of resident's experiences of service delivery, a review of published service standards, an assessment of whether the Customer First scheme needed to be further developed especially in relation to the Cabinet Office Customer Services Excellence Standard, and arrangements for spreading a customer focus throughout the organisation.

The Committee received evidence on the new Customer Service Excellence Standard as a possibility for a programme to follow Customer First Stage 2. The Committee also looked at other aspects of the Council's customer service procedures including use of the ringback and 1471 functions associated with the Council's current telephone system and advertisements and messages relayed to customers whilst on hold.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council adopts the Cabinet Office's new Customer Service Excellence Standard corporately, replacing and building on

the Customer First Stage 2 programme post-March 2009, following corporate completion of Customer First Stage 2.

2. Section 5 of Customer First Stage 2 programme relating to Service Equality be reviewed and developed where necessary and included as an additional section above and beyond the Customer Service Excellence Standard or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage 2.

3. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Councillors to have the opportunity for increased involvement, for example by supporting Council staff involved in mystery shopping exercises or as customer service champions, under the Customer Service Excellence Standard or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage 2.

4. Specific overarching targets for improvement in customer service satisfaction ratings be developed as part of the introduction of the Customer Service Excellence Standard (which requires the introduction of such targets) or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage 2.

5. To assist customers presented with a voicemail message when contacting Council officers by telephone the existing service standards and guidance for the use of voicemail be enhanced and promoted, in particular:

- * All voicemail messages include the officer's name, team or service details and extension number.
- * The alternative voicemail message facility is used if the officer being contacted is out of the office on business for the day or away on holiday.
- * Voicemail messages give an indication when the caller can expect to receive a response, or otherwise provide the caller with an alternative telephone contact officer and number.
- * Targets for responding to voicemail messages are established.

Furthermore, taking into account the above recommendation, the use of voicemail be included in future mystery shopping exercises.

6. To avoid unnecessary calls back to the Council's automated messaging service, callers presented with an answering machine when contacting a member of the public or a Councillor leave an appropriate message and contact details including name and telephone number.

7. A corporate staff suggestion scheme be implemented under the Customer Service Excellence scheme with awards presented for the best suggestions.

8. Existing information relating to the responsibilities of different organisations working within the borough for particular services be expanded and made available via the SBC staff intranet or other suitable way in order for customers contacting Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council with queries regarding services provided by organisations other than the Council to be re-directed accordingly.

9. A review of the provision of children's toys in Stockton-on-Tees Borough

Council reception areas and other appropriate buildings/ areas of buildings be undertaken. In carrying out the review, consideration should be given towards:

- * Assessing the potential customer demand for the provision of children's toys by conducting public consultation in reception areas.
- * Recognising that children's toys cannot be provided in every reception area and are best suited to reception areas suitable for families rather than where customers do not have to queue for very long.
- * The financial implications to the Council.

10. The Customer Service Excellence Awards be continued under the Customer Service Excellence Standard or any other customer service programme implemented following Customer First Stage 2.

11. Officers hold further discussions with the Customer Service Excellence bodies to finalise the one-off costs associated with a corporate application for Customer Service Excellence and that a bid be made as part of the 2009/10 budget-setting process to fund these costs. The North East Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership could, potentially, provide additional funding.

CAB 102/08 Unadopted Streets - Policy and Procedure for Adoption

Consideration was given to a report on unadopted streets and the policy and procedure for adoption.

The report detailed the legal status of adopted and unadopted streets together with a list of known unadopted streets in the Borough. It set out procedures that may be considered for adoption and made recommendations to that effect.

The condition and maintenance of some private streets within the Borough had been a source for concern by residents for many years. Many residents did not, generally, appreciate that some streets were private and that the Council had no obligation or legal rights, without landowner permission, to repair or maintain private streets. It was also highly likely that this issue also had a negative impact upon public satisfaction with roads and footpaths.

Furthermore, in recent years, the Council had allocated Ward Members a Community Participation Budget for small environmental improvements. This had generated enquiries from some members regarding maintenance or improvement works, funded from this budget, to be undertaken on some private streets. This occurred when the street's condition, through lack of maintenance, was a source of concern to local residents.

The report set out the legal situation and proposes policies for dealing with private streets. The definitions associated with the adoption of highways were attached of the report.

RESOLVED that the following policies be approved:-

1. Where Streets require no additional works to become adopted, it is in the interest of the public to adopt and adoption will not have significant ongoing

maintenance liabilities:-

- the Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member be authorised to approve the adoption of such private streets.

2. Where Streets require minor works to become adopted, it is in the interest of the public to adopt and adoption will not have significant ongoing maintenance liabilities:-

- the Head of Technical Services will seek full or partial contributions from residents or landowners to facilitate adoption,
- the Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member be authorised to allocate limited Council funding, to assist adoption, up to a maximum of £5,000 per street, where appropriate,
- the Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member be authorised to approve the adoption of such private streets on condition a private contribution is secured,
- an initial allocation of £10,000 will be provisionally set aside, from the 2009/2010 Highways Maintenance Budget, to fund this activity, should this not be utilised the budget will revert to being used for general highway maintenance.

3. Where Streets require significant works to become adopted, it is in the interest of the public to adopt and adoption will have significant ongoing maintenance liabilities:-

- the Head of Technical Services will seek costs from the landowners,
- the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member be authorised to approve the adoption of such private streets at the expense of the landowner/frontages in accordance with the legal requirements of the Highways Act 1980 (Private Street Works Code).

4. It is clarified to Ward Members that, subject to the agreed protocols for the use of Community Participation Budget (formerly Small Environmental Improvements Budget), private street adoption is a permissible use of that budget.

5. A further report be brought to Cabinet in November 2009 to update members on the progress of dealing with private streets and to review the policies agreed.

CAB **Housing Futures(Options for Future Investment)**
103/08

Consideration was given to a report on the findings of the recent option appraisal undertaken in relation the Councils housing stock. The report also sought approval to further explore stock transfer as the only viable option available to the Council at this time that secures future investment needs (stock and service improvement).

Council had previously undertaken two options appraisals of council housing stock. The first option appraisal undertaken was in 2000 and following a positive tenant ballot resulted in the establishment an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). Following acceptance on the Round 1 ALMO Programme, Tristar Homes Limited (THL) was created in April 2002. A further option appraisal of sheltered housing stock was undertaken in 2005 and

following an overwhelming ballot in favour of small-scale stock transfer, resulted in the transfer of ownership and management of six sheltered housing schemes (152 units of accommodation) to Erimus Housing in July 2007.

The key driver of each previous option appraisals was to determine how best to secure resources to meet both the investment needs of the housing stock and housing service improvements aspired by tenants.

In August 2007 a report was presented to Cabinet, which sought approval to undertake a third option appraisal. The report outlined that whilst the establishment of THL had ensured investment of circa £120million to achieve the decent homes standard, it was now timely to consider the further management and maintenance of the councils housing stock to ensure the Council was in a position to respond appropriately to changing local and national issues. The key current drivers included:

- I. Maintaining property standards following 'decent standard' investment work.
- II. Delivering sustainable communities i.e. delivering more than 'bricks and mortar investment' - creating thriving, diverse communities where people choose to live.
- III. Meeting changing tenant needs and aspirations i.e. responding to the increasing demand for socially rented property from a diverse range of potential tenants.
- IV. Providing the right type and mix of housing (specifically responding to changing demographics and an aging population).
- V. Addressing the problems of 'affordability' and 'access' to the housing market.

Following approval by Cabinet in August 2007 a comprehensive appraisal of all available options had been undertaken. The appraisal followed an inclusive and consultative approach involving both tenants and Members. The options appraised were:

Option 1: Stock retention in the subsidy system

- As an ALMO ('stay as we are')
- Take back in house

Option 2: Stock retention outside of the subsidy system:

- As an ALMO
- Take back in house

Option 3: Stock Transfer

Option 4: Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Option 5: Regeneration Delivery Vehicle

- 'Whole scale' stock solution or
- 'Hybrid' solution

A summary of each option was attached to the report.

As with the previous option appraisals it was essential that each available option be judged against a number of pre-determined criteria. Four draft criteria were initially agreed by Cabinet and following a period of consultation with all council

members (via a Housing Seminar) and tenants a final list of ten criteria were signed off by the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety. The ten criteria were attached to the report.

In order to inform the option appraisal the Housing Service commissioned Savills Commercial to undertake a stock condition survey. 10% of the 10,527 housing stock were surveyed, (the 10% of stock surveyed was 'representative' based on type, age and location of stock). The purpose of the survey was to:

1. Assess current stock condition.
2. Assess the current and future repairs and maintenance liabilities of the housing stock for the next 30 years.
3. Assess improvements required to the stock.
4. Assess properties against the 'decent homes' standard and
5. Assess requirements beyond decent homes.

The survey was concluded in November 2007, it acknowledged the substantial investment made in the housing stock over recent years to bring properties up to the decent homes standard. The stock condition survey identified investment required to maintain this standard (consistently across all stock), plus a programme of investment on items not included within the 'decent homes' standard i.e. work to non traditional properties, roofs, works to external areas and structural repairs to high rise blocks to improve the thermal performance of these properties. However there were limitations to the 'decent homes' standard; it did not meet the aspirations of our tenants, nor did it meet the broader regeneration proposals of the Council in terms of future 'place shaping' (creating well-designed, quality homes and environments).

The report concluded that stock investment needed over the next 30-years totalled in the region of £596m. However as some recent work had recently been undertaken to high-rise blocks this had reduced to £594m. The headline figures from the survey were detailed within the report.

The profile of investment highlighted:

1. Around £25m per year was required in the first 5-years of the 30-yr programme.
2. Average capital spend of £18.5m per year for the first 5-yrs.
3. Average spend of £6.9m per year on cyclical responsive and void works in the first 5- years.

Within the above totals, the first 5-yrs of investments needs included:

4. High-rise cost £6.9m.
5. Non-traditional costs £15m and
6. Environmental (external) improvements £15m.

A comprehensive, financial evaluation of each option available to the Council had been undertaken. The purpose of this exercise was to identify the potential funding that each option would deliver and evaluate whether this funding would be sufficient to maintain a 'consistent' base position for all sustainable housing stock over the next 30-yrs. A summary of the financial evaluation for each option was contained within the report.

An evaluation of all 4 of the 5 options against the 10 pre-determined criteria was attached to the report. Evaluation against Option 2: Stock retention outside of the subsidy system could not be undertaken until CLG releases its Housing Finance consultation paper (anticipated) spring 2009.

Following approval by Cabinet in August 2007, a 'Homes for the Future Tenants Group' was established. CLG and Government Office North East (GO NE) both required tenants to be at the 'heart' of the option appraisal process. Throughout the process the Group had been supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA) and held regular meetings to 'parallel' the exercise undertaken by the Council. The Group had recently finished their option appraisal exercise and had concluded that at this time the only viable option to secure necessary stock investment was stock transfer.

The Group had held a formal feedback session and presented their findings to the Head of Housing and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety on 6.10.08. A copy of the Groups final report had been placed in the Members Library.

As the implications to the Council of the current HRA Review were unknown, as soon as the consultation paper is released a detailed evaluation would be undertaken to determine whether this would option would provide a viable alternative option to stock transfer.

However to prevent any unnecessary delay, it was proposed that further work be undertaken in terms of further exploration of the stock transfer option. There were a number of key stages involved, which included:

- a. Understanding the choices/models available to the Council and its tenants in terms of stock transfer.
- b. Preliminary assessment of each of the above models
- c. Development of a Landlord Specification
- d. Landlord choice

It was prerequisite of CLG and GONE that throughout the above stages tenants and leaseholders remained central to the process and that their views were given due regard. As stated previously the Homes for the Future Tenants Group had worked closely with the Council throughout the option appraisal process, this group had advised the Council they were willing to continue to meet throughout the 'stock transfer exploration' stage.

In addition to the 'Homes for the Future Tenants Group' it was also suggested that a 'cross party' Member Group be established. It was proposed that membership of the group be representative of each of the political parties in the Borough. Whilst the remit of this group would be agreed with group members it was proposed that the Member Reference Group work in partnership with the 'Homes for the Future Tenants Group', supported by Officers of the Housing Service (and others as appropriate) to complete the four stages previously detailed.

It would be necessary to appoint specialist consultants to support Officers of the Council in progressing the 'stock transfer option', they included for example an Independent Tenant Advisor to work with and support tenants, a Communication Specialist to ensure that key messages to tenants and all other stakeholders are delivered in an appropriate and timely manner, Legal Advisor and a Lead Advisor ('specialists' in the stock transfer process). Members were assured that the appointment of consultants would only be undertaken when appropriate and their role would be to support and advise Officers within the Council, there would be no duplication of duty.

In addition to the above work that would be undertaken on stock transfer, further cross- authority work would also be undertaken on modelling potential Regeneration Delivery Vehicles (to inform the 'hybrid' solution). This project would pull together Officers from across the Council and would be steered via the Corporate Capital and Asset Management Group.

It was proposed that the exploration of stock transfer would commence immediately and that a report be presented back to Cabinet in Spring 2009. This report will include:

1. (Pending release by CLG) a financial evaluation of the Housing Finance Consultation Paper, detailing the implications for Stockton and advising whether this option would deliver an alternative option to stock transfer.
2. A detailed financial appraisal of the impact of stock transfer on the Authority.
3. A detailed project update of the work of Homes for the Future Tenants Group and Member Reference Group in undertaking the 'exploration of stock transfer' stages.
4. A progress update (outlining next steps) in relation to the development of a potential Regeneration Delivery Vehicle.

In this future Cabinet report Members would be provided with a comprehensive range of information, asked to make the final choice of option and landlord if stock transfer remained the preferred option.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Stock transfer is currently the only viable option available to the Council to secure future stock and service investment needs.
2. Further exploration of the stock transfer model and further exploration of a Regeneration Delivery Vehicle be supported (to address areas of housing stock which may not be sustainable in the long term and may require regeneration).
3. The establishment of a Member Reference Group and the continuation of the Homes for the Future Tenants Group be endorsed.
4. A further report be brought back to Cabinet following further exploration of the stock transfer.
5. A further report be brought back to Cabinet providing a detailed financial

appraisal of the impact of stock transfer on the Councils General Fund.

6. Following the publication of the CLG Housing Finance Review Consultation Paper (anticipated Spring 2009) a further report be brought back to Cabinet detailing the potential impact of the proposals on the Authority.

7. The appointment of appropriate consultant support as detailed in the body of the report be supported. Funding for such appointments can be afforded within current resource allocations.

CAB **Minutes of Various Bodies**
104/08

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of the Tees Valley Unlimited Leadership Board, The Billingham Partnership, St Ann's Development Board and the Western Area Partnership Board.

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

Tees Valley Unlimited Leadership Board	11 June 2008
The Billingham Partnership	1 September 2008
St Ann's Development Board	11 September 2008
Western Area Partnership Board	29 September 2008

CAB **Stockton on Tees Local Plan Alteration number one:Extension of Saved**
105/08 **Policies**

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan Alteration Number One saved policies exercise. The policies in the Alteration Number One would expire in March 2009 unless they were extended by the Secretary of State. It recommended that the environment policies EN32a, EN32b and EN32c which dealt with flooding, were deleted. Policies S3, S12, S19, S20 and S21 in the retail chapter were also recommended to be deleted, however, the rest of the policies in the retail chapter S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 and S18 were recommended to be saved.

The Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan Alteration Number One was adopted in March 2006. By virtue of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 policies under the Local Plan system were saved for three years pending the adoption of replacement policy document through the Local Development Framework.

This meant the Alteration Number One policies were due to expire in March 2009. To retain the policies beyond this three year period the Secretary of State must agree to issue a direction to this effect. To do this a letter had to be sent to Government Office for the North East six months before the expiration of the three year period.

In June 2008 the Government published the new Planning Policy Statement 12. Section 9 set out criteria which policies should comply with in order to be saved:

- "where appropriate, there is a clear central strategy;

- policies have regard to any sustainable community strategy for the area;
- policies were in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy or spatial development strategy;
- policies are in conformity with the core strategy development plan document (where the core strategy had been adopted);
- there are effective policies for any parts of the authority's area where significant change in the use of development of land or conservation of the area is envisaged; and
- policies are necessary and do not repeat national or regional policy.

The Government had particular regard to:

- policies that support the delivery of housing, including unimplemented site allocations, up-to-date affordable housing policies and policies relating to the infrastructure necessary to support housing;
- policies on Green Belt general extent in structure plans and detailed boundaries in local plans or unitary development plans;
- policies that support economic development and regeneration, including policies for retailing and town centres;
- policies for waste management, including unimplemented site allocations; and
- policies that promote renewable energy, reduce impact on climate change or safeguard water resources."

The policies in the Alteration Number One had been assessed against these criteria and a proposed schedule of policies to be saved and deleted with written justification had been produced and was attached to the report.

The policies in Alteration Number One were divided into two chapters; one on the environment, which set out flooding policies and the other on the economy, which dealt with retailing.

It was considered that the environment policies EN32a, EN32b and EN32c were unnecessary as they repeated Government policy and therefore they were recommended for deletion.

Policies S3, S12, S19, S20 and S21 in the retail chapter were also recommended to be deleted because they were considered to be no longer necessary. However, the rest of the policies in this chapter policies S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 and S18 were recommended to be saved because they were in conformity with national and regional policy and adapted it to the locally specific circumstances of the Stockton Borough. It was considered important to save these policies to avoid a local retailing policy vacuum pending their replacement by the Local Development Framework.

A provisional schedule had been submitted to Government Office for the North East in order to comply with the regulations in PPS12.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The recommendations of the report that Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan Alteration Number One policies EN32a, EN32b, EN32c, S3, S12, S19, S20 and S21 are deleted be endorsed.

2. The recommendations of the report that Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan Alteration Number One policies S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 and S18 are saved be endorsed.

3. Authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to negotiate with Government Office for the North East about the schedule of saved and deleted policies prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

CAB 106/08 Local Development Framework: Interim Student Accommodation Policy Guidance

Consideration was given to a report that sought approval of policy guidance on student accommodation in the Borough, produced to inform decisions on student accommodation planning applications. This effected applications currently under consideration and provided a longer term view to include policies on this issue in the Core Strategy and Regeneration Development Plan Documents.

The recommended policy for the Core Strategy was “Major planning applications for student accommodation will have to demonstrate how they will meet a proven need for the development; are compatible with wider social and economic regeneration objectives; and are conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities.”

The North Shore development was considered to be the preferred location for further purpose built accommodation for students. This site was recommended to be identified for student accommodation in the Regeneration Development Plan document as it already had planning permission.

At present Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had no planning policies to guide officers when dealing with planning applications for student accommodation. The Local Plan contained no specific targets or precise allocations for this particular use and previous applications for student accommodation indicated that there was no clear consensus about the amount and type of accommodation that was required. It was uncertain what impact student accommodation was having on existing residential areas around the Borough, but this study had shown that it was not a significant issue.

National Government policy on housing did not offer any particular guidance on student accommodation. The adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) emphasised the importance of the region’s further and higher education establishments to the economy but offered no direct guidance on the provision of student accommodation.

Therefore, the purpose of the report was to consider the evidence on student accommodation and to set a policy for guiding planning officers on how to deal with current applications for student accommodation and gave clear guidance for prospective developers through statutory planning policy in the future.

It was recommended that the Draft Student Accommodation Study was adopted as interim policy guidance which could be used to determine planning

application decisions with immediate effect. This was because, as part of the LDF process, the Core Strategy policy could not be adopted until Autumn 2009, as it had to be assessed as part of an independent examination.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- 1. The Draft Student Accommodation Study be accepted as an accurate reflection of the current position and provision of Student Accommodation in Stockton and projected student growth.**
- 2. The Draft Student Accommodation Study be accepted as interim policy guidance, which can be used to determine planning applications with immediate effect.**
- 3. The following policy recommendations for the Core Strategy be endorsed:-**

“Major planning applications for student accommodation will have to demonstrate how they will meet a proven need for the development; are compatible with wider social and economic regeneration objectives; and are conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities.”
- 4. The policy recommendations to identify North Shore as the preferred location for future student accommodation in the Regeneration Development Plan Document be endorsed.**