

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 16th April, 2009.

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, L King (CE); D E Bond, M Waggott, N Hart, P J Mennear, G Birtle (LD); J Humphreys, R Kench, B Johns (CESC); G Cummings, J Spittle (R); J Nixon, R Poundford, M Clifford, M Batty, C Straughan.

Also in attendance: Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr J Cherrett, S Chaytor (Tees Active); S Boyd (Tristar Homes Ltd).

Apologies: None.

CAB 1/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Lupton and Mrs Womphrey each declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in respect of item 4 'Review of Tees Active' as a result of their membership of Tees Active Limited's Board

Councillors Mrs Beaumont and Nelson each declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in respect of item 8 'Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools' as a result of their role as Governing Body members on schools referred to in the report.

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 8 'Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools' on the grounds of his grandson's attendance at one of the schools contained within the report.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 9 'Economic Climate Update' as a result of his role on the Regional Development Agency.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 9 'Economic Climate Update' as a result of his role on SDAIS.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 10 'Communities Fund' as a result of his role on the Regional Development Agency.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 10 'Communities Funded' as a result of her membership of Billingham Town Council who had been involved in the tendering process

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 11 'Regeneration Strategy 2007 - Performance Update' as a result of his role on the Regional Development Agency.

Councillors Mrs Womphrey declared a personal, prejudicial interest in respect of item 13 'Review of Concierge Security Service' on the grounds that she had a family member affected by the proposals. Councillor Womphrey left the meeting room during consideration and voting on this item.

Councillor Mrs Rigg declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in respect of item 13 'Review of Concierge Security Service' on the grounds that she had a family member affected by the proposals.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 19 'Strategic Housing Land availability Assessment (SHLAA)' as she was chair of Stockton and District Advice and Information Service(SDAIS)

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 19 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' as he was a governor of a school identified within the SHLAA.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 19 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' as he was a governor of a school identified within the SHLAA.

Councillor Beall declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 19 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' as he was a governor of a school identified within the SHLAA.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 19 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' on the grounds of her role as a Parish Council member affected by the consultation process.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 19 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' on the grounds of his non executive role with North tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust.

Councillor Cunningham declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 21 'Core Strategy' as a result of his role on the Regional Development Agency.

CAB 2/09 Minutes of the meetings held on 5th February 2009 and 19th February 2009

The minutes of the meetings held on 5th February and 19th February were signed as a correct record.

CAB 3/09 Scrutiny Review of Tees Active

Consideration was given to a report that presented the findings of the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee following a review of Tees Active. The review examined Tees Active's performance since it was established in 2004, its contribution to wider corporate priorities, and future plans.

It was explained that Tees Active was an independent leisure trust and had managed Stockton Borough's public leisure centres since May 2004. The review examined Tees Active's performance since it was established, the

contribution made to the Borough's wider priorities, and future plans. The Committee had found that Tees Active had performed well against its original aims, and had made recommendations in order to secure further improvements.

It was noted that following consideration of the recommendations by Cabinet and Tees Active Limited an action plan would be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations would be implemented detailing officers responsible for action and timescales.

Cabinet made reference to paragraph 4.62 of the review and congratulated Tees Active Ltd for their performance on reducing sickness absence levels.

RESOLVED that:-

1. to ensure Tees Active Limited continue to deliver against a range of national and local priorities, a more formal & detailed monitoring regime be implemented in relation to Tees Active's performance, finance, policies and procedures, and that this monitoring information be provided to members through the established Quarterly Performance Reports.

and it be recommended to Tees Active that:-

2. they strengthen consultation and feedback mechanisms in order to strive to ensure that their leisure offer continuously meets the needs and aspirations of the community.

3. in order to further improve the partnership arrangements already in place, they should strengthen their role as Stockton Council's strategic leisure partner by providing support to the broader leisure and sport sector within the borough, and that this support should include:

- a) Contributing to the broader social agendas, including community safety and children and young people;
- b) Facilitating greater participation by hard to reach groups and/or groups that require most support including children looked after, people with disabilities, and the BME community;
- c) Contributing to the development of a coordinated leisure offer in the borough to include public, private and voluntary sector;
- d) Exploiting new management and/ or development opportunities that would enhance leisure provision within the borough, including opportunities through Building Schools for the Future;
- e) Achieving stronger relationships with the voluntary sector, including sports clubs, through improved partnership working;
- f) Contributing towards the full exploitation of the opportunities presented by the Olympic & Paralympic Games.

4. they should consider extending the layer of support in place beneath the TAL Academy for those young sports people who do not meet the standards of the Academy, yet have attained representative honours at a recognised level, as appropriate.

5. they should ensure that all eligible facilities attain Quest accreditation status.

6. they should continue to investigate the scope for increased web interactivity

and online transactions.

7. they should provide the results of their staff survey to the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee as soon as they are available, and that any issues arising from consideration of these results be investigated through the established SBC/Tees Active Management Group.

CAB 4/09 Environment Select Committee - Review of Animal Welfare and Dog Fouling

Consideration was given to the final report of the Environment Select Committee detailing its findings arising from its review of Dog Fouling and Animal Welfare issues.

The purpose of the review was two fold. Firstly the Committee investigated the trend of dog fouling complaints over the last ten years and the effect the Council's policy has had on this, in particular, education and enforcement issues. In addition it considered further control dog fouling in certain designated areas and how these orders would be enforced, and flexibility regarding the level of any fines imposed.

Secondly, the Committee reviewed resource issues arising from the first six months of implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 from April 2008 which placed sole responsibility on the Council for dealing with stray dogs.

The Council's Environmental Health Service currently received approximately 2,000 animal welfare requests each year regarding dogs. The service also received about 350 complaints a year about dogs fouling in public places. Currently there were 200 dedicated dog bins located in popular dog walking areas which were provided to reduce the amount of dog waste left on public footpaths and play areas.

The review highlighted many areas of good practice that was already being carried out. The Committee commended the work of officers dealing with dog fouling and animal welfare issues. The sharp increase in work caused by changes in legislation placed an incredible pressure on the finite resources available to deal with the concerns of the public. The recommendations proposed sought to strengthen the areas of positive working arrangements and go some way to provide opportunities for further improvement. It was suggested that the conclusions/findings of the review would be of interest to any Parish/Town Council in the Borough similarly faced with tackling such issues; and should therefore be shared with these authorities.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the following recommendations proposed by the review; and a summary of the conclusions/findings be shared with each of the Parish/Town Councils in the Borough:-

1. Dog waste bins are GIS located and that this information is available on the SBC web site.
2. To improve the reduction of dog fouling in the borough such incidents should be GIS recorded and that this information be available through the FLARE

system.

3. The call centre to include asking for the nearest lamp post number to assist locating dog fouling on the GIS system if an identifiable address can not be provided.
4. To explore the possibility of Dog Control Orders, as per the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, for specified areas including enclosed children's play areas and associated public seating areas.
5. The Council introduce a pilot scheme of biodegradable pavement painted stencils in known areas of dog fouling to act as an additional reminder to dog owners to act responsibly.
6. The Council turn it's attention to dog fouling problems on and around school grounds and on footpaths that are used to access school grounds and Safe Routes to School to try and minimise the incidence of children being exposed to a potential health and safety hazard.
7. The Council continue to use responsible dog ownership education packages in schools and explore the expansion of its delivery when budgetary pressures allow.
8. The Council proactively lobby local MPs to campaign for the introduction of compulsory dog registration and micro-chipping of dogs.

**CAB
5/09**

Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch, and CCTV

Consideration was given to the final report of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee detailing its findings arising from its review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and the Council's CCTV network. The review examined how each of these functions contribute towards community safety in the Borough, and also took into account the issue of fear of crime, in the context of an overall reduction in the Borough's crime levels. The review presented an opportunity to review the early operation of Neighbourhood Policing in Stockton Borough, examine the contribution made by Neighbourhood Watch, and undertake an assessment of the effectiveness and sustainability of the Borough's CCTV network. It was also clear that although the levels of crime in the Borough had been falling, the fear of crime amongst residents remained, and in some case was increasing, and so an investigation into this aspect of community safety comprised the fourth main element of the Committee's work.

In order to inform the review, the Committee had undertaken wide ranging consultation and Members of Council, the Borough's Neighbourhood Watch membership, parish and town councils, resident groups, Area Partnerships, and local residents were invited to submit comments to the review. The Committee received a good response to its consultation and a range of views had been put forward. The results of the 2008 MORI survey were also considered and, in addition, two focus groups were held in order to assess resident opinion in relation to the fear of crime.

The Committee were of the view that Neighbourhood Policing had had an overall positive effect. Local teams were embedded in the community and relationships with local organisations had been established in a number of cases. PCSOs were seen to be making a valuable contribution towards community safety in the Borough. However, the Committee found that in some aspects there was room for improvement and it would welcome steps to increase community involvement and awareness, especially with regard to the contact number for local teams.

In addition, the Committee found that for residents there remained some confusion regarding the various community safety teams that existed in Stockton and how and when to contact them, especially, but not exclusively, with regard to the Police non-emergency numbers, and the Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement Service. Nationally there had been a halt to the introduction of a national non-emergency number (101), and the Committee recognised that it would be impractical to create such a number on a local basis. However, the Committee believed that there was an opportunity for an investigation to take place as to whether it would be feasible to undertake joint training between Cleveland Police and the Council in order to improve the capacity of call handlers so that resident concerns were recorded and passed on as a matter of course, or that calls could be transferred to the appropriate service where this was possible (recognising the competing demands on call handlers, especially those at Police Headquarters). At present, many residents appeared to be contacting, or were told that they were contacting, the 'wrong' organisation, and the onus was passed back to the original caller to contact the correct organisation.

Cabinet was therefore invited to approve, in principle, subject to a full assessment of both service and medium term financial planning implications recommendations for both this Council and endorse recommendations for submission to external organisations.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve, in principle, subject to a full assessment of both service and medium term financial planning implications the following recommendations for this Council and endorse those recommendations for submission to external organisations:-

1. that the Head of Community Protection be authorised to work in conjunction with Cleveland Police to investigate the potential for joint work to take place in order to ensure that when non-emergency calls are received by either Cleveland Police(eg. 302930/326326) or the Council's Community Protection services (eg. Neighbourhood Enforcement Service 528439), if necessary, the calls, or the details of the issue, are transferred to the correct service for action, thereby improving customer service;
2. that the Committee support the plans of Cleveland Police to undertake further promotional work regarding neighbourhood policing teams, and request that this includes promotion of the 302930 neighbourhood police team number;
3. that Democratic Services amend the Member induction programme/packs so that it includes:

- a) information on the Borough's Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
- b) details of the relevant Ward's Neighbourhood Policing Team;
- c) and that this information is kept up to date;
- d) and that this information is also provided to all current Members as soon as available;

4. that the Committee recognises the work undertaken by Neighbourhood Watch, and in order to further improve this work, Stockton Council and Cleveland Police should work with, and encourage Neighbourhood Watch in Stockton Borough to:

- a) amend the Ringmaster System so that it sends out crime prevention advice and also 'positive' information in relation to local crime trends, and thereby contribute to reducing the fear of crime;
- b) amend the membership forms for the Ringmaster system, so that extra detail can be included, and it is clear as to which scheme the applicant wishes to be a member of;
- c) explore and promote better usage of technology to deliver Ringmaster messages (eg. text messaging/email), and in relation to the use of email messages, lower case text is used in order to ensure ease of reading;
- d) work with the Council and Cleveland Police to undertake a promotional campaign highlighting the benefits of setting up Watch schemes;
- e) support the production of local scheme newsletters by centrally producing templates and sample articles (including crime figures), and investigate the use of volunteers to undertake this work;
- f) seek additional sponsors in order to support its work.

5. that Stockton Council should ensure that the policy of not allowing footage captured by its CCTV network to be sold to media companies is clearly stated in the public domain;

6. that a comprehensive plan be developed for financial support to the Council's CCTV network, in conjunction with relevant partners, as part of a wider appraisal of the financial sustainability of the Security Centre;

7. that planning applications for new developments will be assessed for their suitability to contribute towards the funding of additional crime prevention infrastructure (including CCTV), the levels of provision and/or contributions sought being dependent on the size and type of proposed development, in line with the adopted Supplementary Planning Document 6: Planning Obligations;

8. that in order to contribute to reducing the fear of crime amongst residents:

- a) the Council and Cleveland Police should continue to publicise positive news

in relation to the reduction of crime in the Borough, but that this should not preclude the provision of common sense crime prevention advice;

b) the Council explore the scope for further inter-generational working between young people and older residents of the Borough.

**CAB
6/09** **Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies**

Members considered nominations for representative on 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:

Bader Primary School – Mrs S Brown

Egglescliffe CE Primary School – Cllr A Lewis

Levendale Primary School – Kerry Bailey

Northfield School and Sports College – Miriam Stanton, Mrs M Maddren, Mr D Stringer MBE

Oxbridge Primary School – James Hudson

Priors Mill CE Primary School – Alan Gailmore

Whitehouse Primary School – Roy McManua

**CAB
7/09** **Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary & Secondary Schools in September 2010**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the proposed admission arrangements for primary and secondary schools in September 2010. In order to comply with the Education and Inspections Bill 2006 and the new School Admissions Code, the report included the proposed changes, amendments to the timetable and the Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary Schools for the academic year 2010/11.

The Code of Practice for admissions determined that LA's, when drawing up admission arrangements, should ensure:

- Parents' preferences for schools were met to the maximum extent possible;
- Admission criteria be clear and benefit all pupils including those with special education needs, disabilities or in public care;
- Admission authorities must publish admission arrangements to include

admission numbers, criteria to be used for over-subscription, timetables, co-ordinated arrangements and waiting lists.

The proposed Admission Policy would give priority to applications for admission to a school if that school was oversubscribed, in the following order:

1. Pupils who were in the care of the Local Authority.
2. Pupils with complex needs who had been discussed at the Moderating or Statements Panel and been identified as needing a 'named' primary or secondary mainstream school.
3. Primary pupils who had a brother or sister at the school when the pupil begins, where the parent requested a place at the admission zone school for their older sibling but the LA were not able to offer a place to the older sibling at that school.
(This applied to parents of primary aged children who, in the main round of admissions in respect of the older sibling, put the admission zone school as a 1st preference on the form provided by the LA and returned it on time..)
4. Pupils resident within the admission zone who returned a School Admission Form by the due date.
5. Pupils who had a brother or sister living at the same address and were still at the school when the pupil begins;
6. Pupils who had social or medical reasons for being admitted to the school which would, should the child not be admitted, cause him or her to be seriously disadvantaged or put personal safety at risk.
In all cases corroboration would be sought from independent sources such as a medical specialist who had continuing involvement over a period of time, social worker, or other professional. It should be noted that places would not be allocated on the basis of aptitude or ability.
7. Pupils who attended the nursery of the school they wished to attend on a full time basis.
8. Pupils who lived closest to the particular school measured 'as the crow flies'.

The LA was responsible for administering a co-ordinated scheme for its area in relation to all maintained community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided schools and any Academies established following statutory consultation. The purpose of co-ordinated admission scheme was to ensure that, as far as was reasonably practicable, every parent of a child living in the LA area who had applied for a school place in the normal admission round received an offer of one school place on the same day.

The LA would act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the CAFs. The LA would only make a decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the CAF where

- it was acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority; or

- an applicant was eligible for a place at more than one school, or
- an applicant was not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The Admission numbers for Community and Voluntary Aided Schools for September 2010 were noted.

The inclusion of children with Complex Needs at criterion two was noted. Over the last few years there had been a move to include all children, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), within mainstream schools if the school was able to meet their needs. The LA's oversubscription criteria as it stood only prioritised those who had a statement of SEN that named the school. As it is a statutory duty for the LA to place children with a statement of SEN within named schools, this criteria did not need to be included within the policy.

However, there were an increasing number of SEN pupils who were managed within mainstream schools, having the appropriate level of support in place to ensure that they developed appropriately. Due to this management of SEN pupils within mainstream, these pupils were not necessarily put forward for an assessment of their needs as they were already being met within the school setting. Consequently, children who had complex needs and who lived outside of the admission zone of a potentially oversubscribed school and did not have a statement may not get a place under the current admission policy. The proposed change would ensure this did not happen.

The inclusion of pupils who attended nursery at the school they wished to attend at criterion seven was also noted. There was an increase in primary admissions in September 2008, and many of the parents refused places at their preferred school lived outside the admission zone, however their children had attended the nursery. Under the current admission policy, the LA did not give priority to children who attend the preferred school nursery. So the allocation of the remaining places coming from the last criterion which is based on distance. The School Admissions Code of Practice p.59 stated:

'2.62 Admission authorities that propose to give priority to children who attend the nursery of the co-located children's centre for nursery education should ensure that families that live nearer the school, those who choose to take up other nursery options or the free entitlement at an alternative local provider, or those who have recently moved to the area, are not disadvantaged compared to other families.'

To comply with the school admissions code, it was proposed to add an additional criterion to the policy just above the last criteria, which were those living outside of the zone. This would allow priority to children living outside of the zone who attend the nursery above other out of zone applications.

The new building for Hardwick School was due to be ready in the summer of 2009 which meant that the school would then be situated on Tithe Barn Road in Hardwick. Both of the schools would then be within the Harrow Gate Primary admission zone. The proposed change to the admission zones, which was supported by parents and schools through the consultation, was noted.

The new Admissions Code underpinned the Governments aim to create a

schools system shaped by parents which delivered excellence and equity, developing the talents and potential of every child, regardless of their background; a system where all parents felt they had the same opportunities to apply for the school they want.

The Code stated: 'A fair system needs to provide parents with access to good information about admissions in order to support those parents who find it hardest to understand the system.'

Within Stockton on Tees it was aimed to ensure that the admission arrangements were in line with the principle of fair access to educational opportunity. The proposed changes to the LA's current policies should support this.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Admission Policy, which included the proposed changes, for oversubscribed schools and the Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements for 2010/11 be agreed
2. the change of criterion 2 within the LA's admission policy to include pupils with complex needs who need a 'named' primary or secondary mainstream school be agreed;
3. an additional criterion to include a higher priority to children who live outside of the admission zone but have attended the school nursery of the parents preferred school be agreed;
4. the changes to the admission zones for Hardwick and Harrow Gate Primary Schools to accommodate the move of site of Hardwick School be agreed.

**CAB
8/09**

Economic Climate Update

Consideration was given to a report that provided Members with an overview of the current economic climate, outlining the effects that this was having on Stockton Borough, the mitigations already in place and those being developed in response to this

A report was submitted to Cabinet in December 2008, which set the scene of the economic downturn, and the effects that the global recession and economic climate were having on businesses, rising unemployment, and mortgage repossessions.

The monthly update report enabled a focussed account to be made of the changes to economic circumstances, the direct impact that this may be having on the Borough, and the responses and mitigations either in place or being developed to support businesses and residents. A summary was provided to members noting the economic changes and both the positive and negative of this that had occurred since their previous update on 5th March 2009.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The work being undertaken be supported.

**CAB
9/09**

Communities Fund

Cabinet was presented with a report that confirmed the procurement process and impending award of contracts for the delivery of employability and skills through use of the communities fund in line with the criteria agreed by cabinet in the original reports dated 24 April and 9 October 2008.

Previous Cabinet reports of 24 April 2008 and 9 October 2008 agreed criteria for procurement and delivery of the Employability and Skills element of the Communities Fund. The report presented to Cabinet provided feedback on the open and transparent processes undertaken to ensure the opportunities were widely communicated, ensuring inclusion of all relevant public, private, third sector and voluntary organisations, and to secure delivery organisations procured through Public Regulations 2006 and the councils own contract procedure rules, in line with those recommendations and decisions.

The delivery package previously agreed by this council was in line with the recent recommendations made by Stephen Houghton in the Tackling Worklessness Review, commissioned by DWP in May 2008 to examine how English Local Authorities and their partners could do more to tackle worklessness. The final report was launched on 3rd March 2009, and the measures proposed and agreed were in line with the approaches suggested by the review.

Evaluation of 6 completed tenders revealed three preferred lead organisations to deliver across 5 geographical areas. Contracts amounting to £7.2m over the next three years would be offered to the successful organisations to tackle worklessness, skills and employability leading to employment. The main focus of delivery would be on the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that were identified as having a benefit claim rate of more than 25%.

Three preferred organisations chosen to deliver across Stockton, subject to contract, were as follows:

- Five Lamps to deliver in 12 LSOAs across Thornaby and Stockton Town Centre.
- Newtown Norton and Clarences Community Association to deliver across 8 LSOAs in Billingham and Newtown.
- New College Durham to deliver across 4 LSOAs in Hardwick,

On 16 March preferred lead organisations (subject to contract) and unsuccessful organisations were notified. Press releases were included in Stockton News for the April and May 2009 editions and there was a press release Gazette, Northern Echo on 30 March.

On 19 March all interested organisations, HOS, Key partners were notified.

Renaissance received an update on 17 March 2009 and Economic Regeneration & Transport Partnership would receive an update on 9 May 2009. Delivery of coordinated provision in support of the Tees Valley Employability framework would commence as soon as possible

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the open, transparent and thorough approval and procurement process and the preferred tenderers with whom we will contract for delivery of employability and skills work through the Communities Fund allocations.

**CAB
10/09** **Regeneration Strategy 2007-2012 – Performance Update**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Regeneration Strategy for Stockton 2007-2012. The strategy focused on the regeneration priorities for the Borough and presented its key ambitions over the short, medium and longer term. The report outlined the progress made towards achieving those ambitions, showed progress made towards the measures and targets, and highlighted where focus had changed to reflect current needs and changing priorities.

The report concentrated on several areas of regeneration, which included: Economic Climate; Tees Valley City Region; Economic Reviews; Framework for Regeneration; Tackling Worklessness; Building Schools for the Future; Primary Capital; Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare.

Members noted that the effects of the current economic climate were having a negative impact across the Borough. The Council and its partners were leading the way in moving forward the regeneration of the Borough to address the goals as set out in the Regeneration Strategy, and provide support to local businesses and residents through the economic downturn. There were robust project planning and monitoring arrangements in place through the Council's Project Management Framework and Service Improvement Plans.

Members were informed that Tees Valley Unlimited had submitted the proposals for the Tees Valley City Region Forerunner on 6th March 2009, which had the support of Government Office for the North East. It focussed on removing barriers to growth through greater efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms and commissioning, with developed and accountable governance arrangements. The flexibilities proposed would achieve significant improvements through increased employment, reductions in people receiving out of work benefits, and increasing the ability to capture and grow business investment.

The BSF programmes plans for two new Academies, were noted. If approved after statutory consultation, these Academies would add another dimension to the quality and choice of schools available. It was intended that one Academy will specialise in Digital Creativity, ICT and Media and the other in Health and Wellbeing, Sport and Science. These areas of expertise would produce a highly skilled workforce and strong enterprise network throughout the Borough to support the growth of the businesses of tomorrow. The transformation of primary schools via the Primary Capital Programme, whereby the Council would receive an additional £40 million over 14 years to replace or remodel at least 50% primary school buildings, was also noted. Further funding would be

allocated for this programme from other educational grants, internal funding were possible, and external partners.

The proposals for regeneration within the Momentum programme included: a state of the art hospital facility replacing the two current locations in Stockton and Hartlepool; a range of integrated health centres in strategically accessible locations bringing together doctors practices alongside a range of devolved health provision into the community (previously only available in central hospitals); new academy with a health specialism sponsored by Durham University's medical faculty; University proposals for a Health Innovation Excellence Centre for research specialising in disability and social services; extra care facilities integrated into regeneration locations currently operating in Hardwick to be followed by an integrated approach in Billingham supported by £30m PFI credits and enhancing the town centre proposals.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The work being undertaken be supported.

CAB **Tristar Homes Limited - Status Survey 2008**
11/09

Consideration was given to a report regarding the status survey that was required to be carried out every 2 years with the purpose of gathering feedback from tenants on the services provided by Tristar Homes Limited (THL). The principal objective of the survey was to collect data in order to calculate the National Indicator NI160:- the percentage of tenants of Council housing satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord. The last survey was carried out in 2006, and the report presented to Members was the results of the 2008 survey.

In order to ensure that indicators were comparable between areas nationally, the STATUS questionnaire (the National Housing Federation – Standard Tenant Satisfaction Survey) and methodology had been used. This question included questions relating to:

- Respondents' households
- Housing & services
- Contact with Tristar Homes
- Repairs & maintenance
- Communication & information
- Anti-social behaviour
- Tenant Participation Compacts

The respondents consisted of a sample of 2000 tenants who were issued with questionnaires, of which 55.6% were returned.

From those who responded, 82.7% were satisfied with the overall service provided by Tristar Homes, which was an improvement on the 2006 result of

81%, and maintaining the positive improvements from 2003 when satisfaction was 72.6%. Respondents were asked, of a list of services, which they felt were the three most important. 70.9% felt 'repairs and maintenance' should be included in the top three, 51.2% felt that 'overall quality of your home' was of top three importance, and 46.3% thought 'dealing with anti-social behaviour' was important. Respondents were also asked to what extent a series of anti-social behaviour and crime issues were a problem in their neighbourhood, and over 20% considered the top five issues to be 'rubbish and litter', 'disruptive children and teenagers', 'drunk or rowdy behaviour', 'drug use or dealing', and 'car parking'.

RESOLVED that the headline findings of the survey be noted

CAB 12/09 **Review of Concierge Security Service**

Consideration was given to a report which fed back on the results of a consultation paper regarding the de pooling of the concierge service in the borough. Current Government Policy was that people who received additional housing services should pay the full cost of them directly. This was different from the situation in the past when service charges received by some tenants e.g. concierge costs were pooled. Members considered a report in January 2009 on the de pooling of the concierge service and agreed that a period of consultation would take place with stakeholders.

The Council's concierge security service was first established in 1994 (covering Stockton and Thornaby sites only) and extended to Billingham in 1997, in association with a major programme of refurbishment of the Council's blocks of flats. It provided a 24/7 service to 1,011 tenants and leaseholders living within the following blocks:-

- Anson and Hudson House (Thornaby)
- Hume House and Nolan House (Stockton)
- Elm House, Campbell Court and Walton Court (Stockton)
- Kennedy Gardens (blocks 1 to 3) and Dawson House (Billingham)
- Melsonby Court and Prior Court, Low Grange (Billingham)

The service cost £1,470,890 to run in 2008/09. Costs were divided equally amongst the blocks although there were different numbers of properties in different blocks. The service was financed by a contribution from the overall Housing Revenue Account equating to £792,788 and a weekly service charge to individual residents in receipt of the service of £14.75 (charged over a 48 week period). For those residents who were eligible for housing benefit the service charge cost was met. Approximately 70% of residents in receipt of concierge services were eligible for housing benefit.

Government policy had changed with regard to the pooling of service charges. The current policy was that people should pay directly for the full cost of the services they receive. This policy was enshrined as part of the Government wider policy on rent reform which was contained in the document 'A guide to social rent reforms in the local authority sector' introduced in 2001 and updated in 2006. This document covered a wider set of rules for setting rent within pre determined constraints set by Government to control rent increases and service

charges and bring them into line with other rents in the social sector (such as housing association rents). Within the guidance was an acceptance that the total cost of services would not be de pooled overnight as otherwise they would be unaffordable to service users. De pooling must therefore be planned and often staged.

The issue of de pooling was picked up as part of the Audit Commission inspection of Tristar Homes in 2006 with a specific recommendation that the Council integrate value for money into working practices by agreeing more stretching targets for de pooling. At the point of inspection it was outlined to the Audit Commission that the authority intended to de pool service charges over a six year period (in line with the then rent restructuring timetable). It was outlined that in Stockton de pooling could only be achieved by a mixture of reducing costs via remodelled services and increasing individual service charges. The Audit Commission were unhappy with the timescales for de pooling on the basis that balances on the housing revenue account which could have been available for service improvements were being used to support de pooling.

Members had received a report in January 2009 that requested a stakeholder consultation take place to determine how the concierge service should be remodelled to reduce costs. Previous reports were also considered by Cabinet in November 2006 and February 2007. These reports secured members support for initial de pooling and the level of concierge service was altered between 1.00am and 7.00am to single crewing following a successful pilot and consultation with affected tenants and leaseholders.

Members were informed that there was a current workforce of 34 Concierge Security Officers (pay band D) and four Supervisors (pay band H). The level of cover that was consulted upon was a workforce of 22 Concierge Security Officers (pay band D) and three Supervisors (pay band I). There would be one officer on each site, plus one mobile supporting officer (5 officers in total), two officers on duty at the security centre, to cover Elm / Walton / Campbell and provided mobile back-up to the other 4 sites (relief for breaks and extra cover in the event of any incidents) on a day shift from 8.00am – 8.00pm. The night shift, 8.00pm – 8.00am, would have two officers on duty at the Security Centre, monitoring CCTV and provided access control for all 5 sites, plus 2 officers mobile, patrolling all 5 sites. One Supervisor may also be available as mobile back-up on both the day and night shift.

There was a broad support for change in service with those tenants consulted however the vast majority wanted the hours' concierge were on site to change. Therefore the proposal submitted to members was a day shift of 6.00am – 6.00pm, with four officers on shift and the bulk of monitoring being provided by the Security Centre. The night shift would be 6.00pm – 6.00am, with seven officers on each night shift, with an onsite presence at each of the main blocks.

There were five vacancies within the current establishment of 34 Concierge Security Officers, so a further reduction of seven officers was needed. Ten officers had expressed a level of interest in early retirement and/or voluntary redundancy (ER/VR) on a 'no commitment' basis although no formal invitation to apply for ER/VR had been issued.

The option proposed would save £500,000 per annum. If the new service was

fully in place by April 2010 there would be £292,788 which would not have been directly de pooled, however the role of concierge staff would change as a result of the review and would include a range of housing management duties. These duties would be funded from the housing management budget.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the de pooling of concierge charges in line with Government policy be accepted.
2. to the new level of service as detailed be agreed.
3. the Head of Community Protection be authorised to progress discussions with staff and trade unions in order to reduce the concierge workforce to 22 officers (a reduction of 12 on the current establishment) and note that the cost of the changes in staffing will be met from the Housing Revenue Account as part of the medium term financial plan.

**CAB
13/09**

Review of Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board

The report submitted to Cabinet proposed a review of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership to strengthen partnership arrangements including engagement and culture; to further improve the partnership approach to delivering better outcomes for local communities and support the Comprehensive Area Assessment

It was proposed that the review would focus on;

- Improved focus and alignment of plans across all sectors to achieve cross cutting Stockton Renaissance priorities;
- Improved identification and alignment of resources to deliver shared priorities;
- Support achievement of the cross cutting Local Area Agreement/Sustainable Community Strategy targets prioritised by Renaissance for 2009/10;
- An increase in business sector engagement in Stockton Renaissance; and
- An increase in children and young people engagement in Stockton Renaissance.
- A positive judgement from Comprehensive Area Assessment;

The proposed methodology was discussed which included a combination of reviewing existing good practice, identifying toolkits, reviewing outcomes from analytical activity to date and piloting a themed priority task based approach to cross cutting issues. These were to be followed up by a series of workshops/discussion groups with stakeholders. The detail of the content of desk based work was also discussed

Feedback from the Stockton Renaissance Annual Event, Partnership Healthchecks for Renaissance, which took place at the February 2009

Renaissance Meeting, were also be taken into account.

Consultation methods were also discussed and Members were informed who the target groups would be during this process.

Members also heard about the 'Piloting of different ways of working' and it's focus on the 'Credit Crunch' and how it would be possible to lessen the impact of the economic climate on the borough and enhance opportunities in preparation for the upturn. Along with the Credit Crunch, which was the most identified area, there were other cross cutting priority areas proposed for Stockton Renaissance to focus on:

The review of Stockton Renaissance would also be used to inform the discussions around the future of the Community Empowerment Network, which was being considered as part of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund Review, which was due for completion Autumn 2009.

The outcome of the review and an improvement plan, would be reported to Renaissance and Cabinet in September 2009, which would cover any new governance or agenda management arrangements for Stockton Renaissance.

RESOLVED that

1. the report be noted.
2. the the approach for the review of the partnership, as detailed in the report, be approved.

CAB
14/09 **Workwise Programme - Update**

The report was an update on the progress of the Council's Workwise programme, including an assessment of the Council's current office accommodation. It outlined a framework for development of solutions to ensure that infrastructure, policies and procedures were integrated and co-ordinated to achieve a common vision.

Members received information highlighting Stockton being a high performing Council with high levels of resident satisfaction, which were outlined by the recent MORI results. It was highlighted that the environment within which Stockton Borough Councils were operating were constantly changing and the pace of change, much the same as the pace of life, is continually quickening.

It was against this backdrop that the authority considered how the organisational infrastructure could be designed and developed to facilitate rather than restrict change and thereby help to maintain Stockton's high levels of performance and satisfaction.

Members heard that there were currently a number of strategies and plans which linked to the organisational infrastructure and that the Workwise programme had considered each of them to determine a vision for the way we work in the future together with an integrated approach to achieving the vision.

The Committee were presented with further detailed information which included the following:

- Building on the success of Customer First.
- Staff working flexibly
- Staff harnessing technology.
- Complimenting the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation programme (EIT).
- Providing the building blocks for service improvement and efficiency.
- Enabling the rationalisation of office space.

Members also received detailed information outlining the current position in relation to the various strands of the programme, as listed below:

- Information & Communication Technology
- Information Management
- Human Resources
- Office Accommodation

It was also noted what the aims and benefits were and how the Workwise programme would be taken forward.

RESOLVED that the vision / recommendations and integrated approach to developing modern working methods be approved.

**CAB
15/09**

Minutes of Various Bodies

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of Various Bodies

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

Tees Valley Unlimited Leadership Board 10 December 2008

Tees Valley Unlimited – Tees Valley Living Board 22 January 2009

Western Area Partnership 26 February 2009

Western Area Partnership 23 February 2009

The Billingham Partnership 10 February 2009

The Billingham Partnership 2 March 2009

St Ann's Development Board 5 February 2009

St Ann's Development Board 5 March 2009

Central Area Partnership 20 November 2008

Central Area Partnership 29 January 2009

CAB **Appointments to Outside Bodies**

16/09

Cabinet was requested to appoint Members to various outside bodies.

An updated version of the appendix, which had been issued with the agenda, was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the appointments, as detailed in the updated appendix, be approved.

CAB **Economic Viability Of Affordable Housing Requirements In Stockton**

17/09

Consideration was given to a report relating to Economic Viability of Affordable Housing in Stockton.

It was explained that Arc4 study had been commissioned to test the economic viability of the affordable housing requirements set out in Policy CS8 in the Core Strategy DPD Publication Draft. The report (Economic Viability Of Affordable Housing Requirements In Stockton: Report for Stockton Borough Council) was provided to members as was the executive summary. The methodology used was the subject of a consultation exercise with the development industry and a report detailing this was available to members.

The report found that, in the still relatively favourable market conditions of late 2007, most sites would be viable with at a level of 15-20% affordable housing provision and with a tenure split of 80% social rent and 20% shared ownership.

The report recommended that the baseline policies for affordable housing provision should be established in the context of market conditions in late 2007. However, it also recommended that those policies would need to be applied with considerable flexibility whilst the market was in recession.

The report did not support a threshold for affordable housing provision that was below the national indicative figure of 15 dwellings. Therefore, it was recommended that the threshold for affordable housing provision in Policy CS8 be raised to 15 dwellings.

During discussion of the matter members requested that they be provided with a definition of affordable housing.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. the contents of the report be noted

2. the following recommendations of the Economic Viability Of Affordable Housing Requirements In Stockton Report for inclusion in the housing policies of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document be agreed

- **Maintain the affordable housing target of 15-20%**

- **Raise the threshold for affordable housing provision to 15 dwellings**

**CAB
18/09**

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

The first Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had been published on 20th October 2008. SHLAA was the key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes. The assessment was required by national planning policy, set out in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3).

The national SHLAA Practice Guidance stated that the Assessment, once completed, should be regularly kept up-to-date (at least annually). Therefore, the 2008 SHLAA was now in the process of being reviewed and updated to produce the 2009 SHLAA.

An internal highways workshop focussing specifically on highways to assess the SHLAA sites was held on 19th February 2009. An internal stakeholder workshop to assess the SHLAA sites within a framework of suitability, availability and achievability had been held on 5th March 2009. Cabinet was provided with a schedule of sites with the internal stakeholder assessment, the schedule of sites discounted as being unlikely to yield 10 dwellings or more and the schedule of sites with designations to which zero housing potential has been ascribed. It was intended to consult externally on the assessment over the five-week period Friday 8th May to Friday 12th June 2009.

Cabinet was advised of the comments expressed by Planning Committee following its consideration of the SHLAA at its meeting held on 8th April 2009. Those comments related primarily to concerns regarding a lack of community representation on the Steering Group; and the envisaged role of developers on the same group. The Head of Planning Services explained that the SHLAA was part of the evidence base for the LDF and it was important (in order for it to be credible and robust) that it was a purely technical exercise. Determination of relevant; and an appropriate number; of community representatives was also difficult to achieve whilst maintaining a 'manageable' number on the Steering Group. Therefore, the officer stated that it would not be appropriate to have community representation on the Steering Group. The officer added that the five-week consultation period and stakeholder event would provide the opportunity for community views on the assessment. The role of developers on the Steering Group; and how any conflict of interest situation was reconciled; was also clarified. Members expressed concern that all schools contained within the schedule of sites with the internal stakeholder assessment should be consistent and that Blakeston School should refer to buildings and hardstanding only; and that the estimated yield of properties be reassessed accordingly.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

i) The contents of the report be noted.

ii) The schedule of sites with the internal stakeholder assessment be amended to be consistent in reference to each school and that Blakeston School should refer to buildings and hardstanding only; and that the estimated yield of properties be reassessed accordingly.

iii) The process for internal assessment of suitability, availability and achievability for external consultation over the five-week period Friday 8th May to Friday 12th June, be endorsed.

iv) Endorse the assessment of sites unlikely to yield 10 dwellings or more for external consultation over the five-week period Friday 8th May to Friday 12th June.

CAB 19/09 Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping Supplementary Planning Document

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping Supplementary Planning Document.

The Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD would be designed to provide certainty to developers and improve the Council's negotiation of the planning obligation contributions required for open space, sport and recreation facilities. This was to be achieved through the application of standards for provision set out in the document. Standards had been determined for the quantity, quality and proximity of open space, sport and recreation facilities. The Supplementary Planning Document and appendices were available to members.

It was explained that Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation outlined the need to move away from previous national standards to set locally derived standards. In order to derive these standards a robust local evidence base was required in the form of a Planning Policy 17 Assessment as outlined in Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17.

The guidance outlined a process in which local needs had to be identified, local provision audited, standards set and applied and policies drafted. Identifying local need had been undertaken through the Sport, Recreation and Leisure Survey and interest group consultation. Auditing local provision had been achieved through the Open Space Audit, a recent Open Space Audit Update and a built facilities audit. The PPG17 Assessment was available for members to view.

A summary of the evidence was included in the PPG17 Assessment along with explanation of the standards. This would be provided as an appendix to the SPD in order to support the standards contained in it. The Assessment and SPD would provide evidence for policies that would be contained in the Core Strategy and Environment Development Plan Documents. The Assessment would also provide evidence for the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging Sport and Active Leisure Strategy.

The standards as contained in the document were identified for members.

It was explained that Standards were not intended to be retrospectively applied to existing development, although they could be used to inform improvements where opportunities arose; rather they were to be a requirement for new

development. Quantity standards would be used to identify the level of demand caused by the new development and areas where provision was deficient. Quality information would be used to identify sites for improvement. Proximity would be used to highlight areas of deficiency and to demonstrate the location of open space and facilities that were directly related to developments.

To determine if open space was to be provided onsite a 'minimum acceptable size' standard had been included for different types of space to ensure that spaces were only included on site if they were to be of a sensible size to be of use and efficient to maintain.

Members noted that in order to ensure that the open space provided, as part of new development was suitable and to ensure that high quality developments were created the SPD includes a landscaping section. This section of the SPD has been prepared by Urban Design, in close consultation with colleagues from other sections. The landscaping section of the SPD had been designed to increase the weight given to existing knowledge and practice through its inclusion in planning guidance.

The next stage of the process was to undertake consultation on the document for a period of six weeks. Comments received would be used to modify the document where appropriate. It was anticipated that the consultation would be undertaken during April and May 2009. Once comments had been considered and amendments made, the document would return to Cabinet to be considered for adoption.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- 1. the contents of the report be noted.**
- 2. the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping Supplementary Planning Document be agreed for public consultation.**

CAB 20/09 Local Development Framework: Submission Version Core Strategy, Schedule of Comments and Revised Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

It was explained that the Core Strategy DPD was the key document in the new Local Development Framework (LDF) and would provide strategic planning policies for the Borough. It was noted that Members had agreed previous versions of the document for consultation purposes; Issues and Options in March 2006; Preferred Options in June 2007; and the Publication Draft in August 2008. The next stage in the process was for the Core Strategy to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. At Cabinet in August 2008, members resolved that prior to submission; major changes to the Core Strategy should be brought back to Cabinet.

Cabinet was presented with the Submission Version of the Core Strategy with proposed changes highlighted in track changes mode, a separate schedule of all comments made to the Publication Draft and how they had been dealt with

and the Habitat Regulations Assessment. Cabinet was informed that the Habitat Regulations Assessment had been amended since publication to acknowledge comments submitted by Natural England and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Cabinet was given details of the submission stage. It was explained that once the proposed changes had been agreed, the Publication Draft Core Strategy and a Schedule of Proposed Changes would be submitted to PINS and dates for the independent examination would be arranged. It was proposed to submit the Core Strategy to PINS in May 2009.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- 1. The Proposed Changes to the Publication Draft Core Strategy be endorsed and;**
- 2. How comments made to the Core Strategy in response to the Publication Consultation have be dealt with be endorsed;**
- 3. The findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment be endorsed; and,**
- 4. Any further minor amendments to documents prior to submission to the Secretary of State be delegated to the Head of Planning Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport.**