

## **Cabinet**

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 17th December, 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 (CEO); J. Danks, E Chesworth (R); P. Dobson, R. Smith, R. McGuckin, M Clifford (DNS); J. Humphreys, R. Kench, S. Willson, J Doherty (CESC); M. Waggott, M Henderson (LD), J Lowther (JSU).

**Also in attendance:** L. Snowball (Audit Commission).

**Apologies:** None.

### **CAB 139/09**

Cllr Cunningham declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled Renewable Energy Strategy as his employment was associated with renewable energy. Councillor Cunningham left the meeting during consideration and voting on the item.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the Item entitled Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as she was a member of Castle Levington and Kirk Levington Parish Council.

### **CAB 140/09**

The minutes of the meetings held on 5th and 26th November were confirmed as a correct record.

### **CAB 141/09**

Members were presented with the Audit Commission's Annual Audit Letter for 2009.

The Audit Commission was responsible for arranging for the audit of the accounts of the Council (either by private firms or through their own auditors). They were also responsible for leading the annual Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

A formal stage in this process was the production of the "Annual Audit Letter". The Annual Audit Letter for 2008/9 had been received and was presented to Members.

The Annual Audit Letter provided a comprehensive and independent assessment of the overall "health" of the Council. It reported on the detailed results of all service inspections and assessments and also referenced how the Council worked with key partners. In line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council.

The Audit Commission considered that Stockton on Tees Borough Council was improving well and was judged as being at level 4 (the highest rating) for its Use of Resources.

The Audit Commission had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council for 2008/9.

The Commission considered that the Council's arrangements for managing finances were excellent, with a strong value for money culture. The arrangements for governing the business were also judged as being excellent with a systematic approach to commissioning and procurement supported by high levels of partnership working and joint commissioning and resulting in savings.

It considered that the Council performed well at Managing Resources. For 2008/9 a new line of enquiry was introduced that related to how well the Council was managing its use of natural resources and how it was influencing others.

The annual audit letter complimented the Organisational and Area Assessment outcomes within the CAA framework and primarily focused on judging the Council's use of resources and value for money. It also included reference to a review, conducted jointly by the Audit Commission and Deloitte across the North East, in relation to how organisations were working together to tackle health inequalities. A more detailed review was also undertaken across Stockton of action being taken to address teenage pregnancy. Both of these informed the Area Assessment aspect of CAA.

The Commission considered that the Council needed to:-

Work with partners, using the recommendations in the health inequalities reports to improve targeting and performance management, making effective use of the voluntary sector and community views.

RESOLVED that contents of the Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter be noted.

## **CAB 142/09      Comprehensive Area Assessment Results**

Consideration was given to the outcome of the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment led by the Audit Commission, together with areas of focus identified for 2010.

CAA had been introduced in April 2009 as a new way of assessing local public services by examining how well the Council worked together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people it served. It was a joint assessment process, led by the Audit Commission and included Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Probation, HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

The CAA framework encompassed two aspects; an Area Assessment focusing on local priorities and how well local public services are delivering improved outcomes for people; and an Organisation Assessment, which looked at the Use of Resources and Managing Performance. The summary and detailed reports of each assessment were submitted, which illustrated that:-

-Stockton on Tees BC (SBC) performed well under its organisational

assessment, achieving maximum marks for Use of Resources, Managing Finance and Governing the Business, and was delivering improvements for local people;

-The Council had greatly improved the environment through its work on reducing CO2 emissions and through increased recycling, had created jobs and had brought about improvements through regeneration;

-The Council provides good leadership across the borough, and people can easily understand how the Council arranges its services and how it makes decisions;

-It has a strong value for money culture and a history of providing high quality services for low cost;

-The Area Assessment revealed that high quality improvements could be seen to have been made to Thornaby, Billingham, Yarm and Stockton Riverside, and that neighbourhood regeneration was progressing well;

-The area had made one of the largest cuts in carbon emissions in the country, was clean and more people were being attracted to live in the area;

-The crime rate for the area had fallen, was lower than in similar areas in England, and fewer young people were committing crimes;

-Children did well at school with GCSE results improving and now in line with national averages, and more young people than ever before were going on to higher education;

-Death rates from the 'big killer' diseases had fallen, and SBC was good at getting people to give up smoking and to take up physical activity.

In terms of areas of focus for 2010, it was noted that:-

-The Council and its partners faced a major challenge in delivering some of their targets for improvement in the current economic climate, and this was never more illustrated when faced with the potential loss of 1700 jobs at Corus;

-Life expectancy amongst males was not increasing however, the number of pregnant teenage young women had recently increased, and there were too many overweight children in the borough;

-The Council needed to achieve more to reduce inequalities around health, employment and skills, and improve its outcomes from children's services and social care services for adults, in particular the response to the personalisation of those services;

-People in Stockton on Tees produce more waste and recycle less, than in other places;

-More work was needed to uplift people's satisfaction with their area, and in particular to improve the perception that people from different backgrounds get on well together, or treat one another with respect.

RESOLVED that the outcomes of the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment and the areas of focus identified for 2010 be noted.

**CAB 2009 Annual Performance Rating of Children's Services**  
**143/09**

Consideration was given to a report on the 2009 Annual Performance Rating of Children's Services. Attached to the report was the letter from Ofsted that provided the 2009 rating for Children's Services in Stockton-on-Tees. The Council was rated as performing well.

The annual rating of children's services was carried out by Ofsted, within the overall framework for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). As this was the first year of reporting under the new national framework, it was not possible to make direct comparisons with the 2008 annual performance assessment for Children's Services although the 'performing well' rating was in line with the 2008 grading of 'good' for the overall effectiveness of services. The 2009 ratings were based on the following scoring labels:-

Performs excellently: an organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Performs well: an organisation that exceeds minimum requirements

Performs adequately: an organisation that meets only minimum requirements

Performs poorly: an organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

The annual rating was based on the Ofsted performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local authority area. It drew together relevant findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of education, care and skills and sets this evidence alongside the relevant Every Child Matters indicators from the National Indicator Set (NIS). Evidence in the profile covered three main areas:-

- the findings from regular and ongoing inspection and regulation of services, settings and institutions;
- findings from safeguarding and looked after children inspections; unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection; evaluations of serious case reviews; safeguarding and looked after children findings from recent joint area review inspections; and findings from triggered inspections;
- performance against Every Child Matters indicators from the NIS.

Ofsted's annual performance rating of council children's services was reported within the CAA organisational assessment of councils, and contributed in particular to the CAA overall managing performance score for councils. Ofsted's performance profile and a range of other available evidence also contributed to the joint inspectorate area assessment within the CAA framework which included an evaluation of outcomes for children and young people.

The summary in the rating report identified a number of strengths and a few areas for development. The report supported the Council's own assessment of its performance and would contribute to the review of strategic plans and service improvement plans, to ensure the necessary actions were in place to build on strengths and respond to the areas for development. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) provided the strategic framework for improvement in services, and included a range of actions already in place to address areas for development.

The Council's progress in delivery and improvement of services would continue to be monitored through a range of meetings over the year with regional and national agencies. Progress in addressing performance would be reported to Cabinet through the quarterly corporate performance framework.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the good outcome of the 2009 annual performance rating be noted.

**CAB 144/09 Adult Social Care Annual Performance Assessment 2008-09**

Consideration was given to a report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) that summarised the findings of the 2009 annual performance assessment for Stockton-on-Tees Council. The performance grades for the Council were:-

- \* Overall grade for delivery of outcomes: performing well.
- \* Improved health and well-being: performing well
- \* Improved quality of life: performing well.
- \* Making a positive contribution: performing excellently.
- \* Increased choice and control: performing adequately.
- \* Freedom from discrimination and harassment: performing well.
- \* Economic well-being: performing well.
- \* Maintaining personal dignity and respect: performing well.

The APA of social care services for adults was based on a range of evidence, including a self-assessment by the authority, performance indicators, other related service inspections, and routine business meetings between CQC and the Council.

The gradings were based on the following definitions:-

- \* Performing poorly – not delivering the minimum requirements for people.
- \* Performing adequately – only delivering the minimum requirements for people.
- \* Performing well – consistently delivering above the minimum requirements for people.
- \* Performing excellently- overall delivering well above the minimum requirements for people.

The overall 'performing well' grading was in line with the overall 'good' rating of 2008. The report included an assessment of 'Leadership and Commissioning and use of resources' which was not graded: this section contributed to the overall assessment of the Council under the CAA (Comprehensive Area Assessment) framework.

RESOLVED that the outcome of the 2009 annual performance assessment (APA) be noted.

**CAB 145/09 LA Nominations**

In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school governors, approved at Minute 84 of the Cabinet (11th May 2000), Cabinet were requested to approve the nominations to school Governing Bodies as detailed within the report.

RESOLVED that appointments be made to the vacant Governorships subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure, as follows:-

Bewley Infant School – Christopher Anderson (School Nomination)

Joint Management Committee Green Gates and Bishopton Centre – Cllr Julia Cherrett (LD)

The Oak Tree Primary School – Norma Wilburn (Lab)

**CAB 146/09 Efficiency, Improvement, and Transformation (EIT) Review of Highways, Lighting and Network Management**

Consideration was given to a report that presented Cabinet with the findings of the gateway EIT review on Highways, Lighting and Network Management which was undertaken by an Officer team and reported into Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee.

This review built upon the work completed by the Regeneration & Transport Select Committee which was approved by Cabinet on 4 January 2007 and formed part of a three year programme of EIT (Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation) reviews covering all services provided by the Council. The programme aimed to ensure that all services were reviewed in a systematic way to ensure that they were provided in the most efficient manner, provided value for money and identified opportunities for service improvements and transformation.

The review covered Highways and Network Management but the main focus, given the timescales, was centred on street lighting operations. There were two reasons for this, firstly, the announcement of a new round of PFI credits for street lighting renewal during the review period had to channel resources into the evaluation of whether or not to pursue with an expression of interest. Secondly, early baseline work identified that there were significant annual revenue savings to be gained by changing the way the Council procured and delivered its street lighting energy and maintenance.

The review areas relating to highway improvement works identified some opportunities to improve current working arrangements, however the savings associated with these, although valuable, were related to capital expenditure not Council Revenue. Some further work was required to consider how these could be taken forward. This also included some analysis of the Highway Inspection function, and how this linked to the recent Network Management Duty, needed to be reviewed.

The Arts, Leisure & Culture Select Committee played a crucial role in reviewing the baseline and options stages of this review, providing challenge to the review team at each stage.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Council pursue the application for PFI Credits and, if successful, procure a private finance operator to deliver a street lighting replacement and maintenance programme.
2. If the Council were not successful with the application for PFI credits, further consideration would be given to bring the street lighting service in-house to deliver expected efficiencies.

3. Detailed exploration of partnership working with other Tees Valley Authorities be closely considered in line with recommendation 2 above.
4. Funding mechanisms be considered through prudential borrowing or capital investment to bring forward the replacement of obsolete column stock, delivering a revenue energy and maintenance saving in line with recommendation 2 above.
5. Decommissioning of lit road signs and bollards, replaced with reflective equipment to provide a revenue energy saving.
6. Further work be undertaken, in line with the commercial service EIT review to ensure that highway improvement works can be delivered in house on a commercial basis, to reduce the need to have to appoint delivery partners for capital highway works.
7. Further work be undertaken to look at strengthening the links between the Network Management Duty and the Highway Inspection Service, currently delivered by Care for Your Area.
8. Bus shelter maintenance budget to be transferred to Direct Services from 2010/11.
9. Highways related consultation be delivered through an electronic mechanism utilising internet and email communication where residents and customers are prepared to engage.

**CAB 147/09 Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation (EIT) Review of Property and Facilities Management**

Consideration was given to a report that presented Cabinet with the findings of the EIT review of Property and Facilities Management. This review was supported by Gateway Reviews undertaken by the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee.

The review examined the current methods and processes adopted in the delivery of facilities management and considered how services could be improved whilst realising efficiency savings. The following baseline position was identified:-

- \* The approach to management of buildings across the Council was fragmented, with responsibility for buildings being that of service managers.
- \* Maintenance and resource planning was undertaken within service areas and not necessarily prioritised on corporate need or requirement.
- \* There was no corporate approach to the organisation and management of buildings and procurement of services e.g. building cleaning, security, etc.
- \* Overall the Council spent approximately £10 million on Council buildings (excluding schools) and there were opportunities for savings.

Recognition was made of the Council's Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) which had a model for facilities management included in it. This would be delivered by the appointed Local Education Partner (LEP) as part of the BSF process.

Cognisance had been made of the methods used by other authorities (some of which had won national awards) in managing their assets. This identified two common themes:-

\* Firstly, there was a degree of high level strategic management that looked at overall service delivery and matching that against assets that were available, including consolidating services where possible into one building. This led to a strategic view of which buildings were to be kept in the council's ownership and which were available to be disposed of.

\* Secondly, the function of facility management had been consolidated into one service area.

The recommendation of the EIT review was that we consolidate the management arrangements and responsibilities of all buildings (excluding schools). The delivery arm, incorporating a range of services involved in facilities management, would be consolidated into one service area and this would incorporate facilities management, building services, architects, land and property. It was also considered that the strategic elements of the asset management function covering asset utilisation strategy, retention, disposal, investment, planning, should be within a separate area given the links to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Regeneration Strategy.

Early discussions were held with other Councils in the area in relation to the way they delivered facilities management and at least one of them would be keen to discuss a partnered approach. The proposed structure for future delivery of facilities management was very similar and this option was being explored further. Although the possibility of outsourcing was considered, this was not supported by the Committee who supported a partnership approach.

The Arts Leisure and Culture Select Committee who conducted baseline and options challenge to the review supported internal restructure and running the service in conjunction with another / multiple neighbouring Authorities. The Committee also commented that whatever was finally agreed would need to operate alongside the Local Education Partnership in relation to the Property and Facilities Management of Schools.

RESOLVED that:-

1. A consolidated approach to the Management of the Council's Buildings Assets be adopted.
2. The delivery element of the Facilities Management process be consolidated into one service area with the premise that all buildings were considered to be corporate assets.
3. The budgets in relation to the management of the buildings be consolidated into one area.



4. Further investigations be carried out into potential partnering solutions.

**CAB  
148/09**      **Connect2 - Update**

Cabinet was advised of progress on the Connect2 project; which was a scheme designed to link Ingleby Barwick with Eaglescliffe, Preston Park, Thornaby and Yarm via a series of pedestrian and cycle routes, including new bridges across the River Leven and Tees.

As a result of a successful bid for Big Lottery funding in December 2007, Sustrans secured £50 million of grant funding for 'Connect2', a national initiative designed to link communities currently severed by a physical barrier such as a road, river or railway. Each of the 79 Connect2 schemes across the UK would receive a share of this grant over the five years from 2008/09 to 2012/13 inclusive, with the Stockton Council in line to receive £600,000 towards the cost of providing the bridge links between Ingleby Barwick and Yarm and Ingleby Barwick and Eaglescliffe.

The estimated costs for the two schemes was £6million leaving a funding shortfall of £5.4million. A number of options to plug that gap had been explored, such as the Regional Funding Allocation from the Department for Transport and landfill tax funds, alas to no avail. There was also an expectation that some of the funding would come from developer contributions on sites within Ingleby Barwick which was now not going to be possible in the near future.

Despite this, the design of the linkages had been taken to the stage where routes had been examined and reviewed or re-aligned in order that there was a clear understanding of the total costs and the deliverability of the schemes. Details of the results of the feasibility studies for each link were submitted, along with a new link identified from The Rings along the west side of Queen Elizabeth Way, to link with the existing cycleway/footway. It was hoped that this latter scheme could be delivered in 2010/11 with funding allocated from the Local Transport Plan, and hopefully links 3 and 4 would also be achieved via this funding route. Officers would now look to engage in further detailed discussions with Sustrans to seek opportunities to look for underspend on other Connect2 projects nationally, in order to reduce the identified funding gap.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Officers continue to actively seek the necessary funding for the pedestrian and cycle linkages that connect the communities of Ingleby Barwick, Thornaby, Yarm and Eaglescliffe.
2. The Acting Head of Technical Services work with Sustrans to explore other opportunities to deliver the objectives for which the £600k was allocated within the timescales set and should this prove to be more challenging, then Sustrans be informed accordingly.
3. The community be informed of the continued commitment to deliver these schemes as and when resources become available.

**CAB**      **Economic Climate Update Report**

**149/09**

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, and the mitigations already in place and those being developed in response to this.

The monthly update report enabled a focussed account to be made of any recent changes to economic circumstances (both positive and negative) 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.

The recent announcement from Corus that it was to mothball its Teesside Cast Products at the end of January, with the loss of 1,700 jobs, had been a particular blow to the region. This Council, other Tees Valley Local Authorities and partners, had since developed a comprehensive package of support for those affected, including an on-site facility with employment, information and advice and guidance experts. Petroplus had also regrettably confirmed that it would not be re-starting its refinery, with an expected loss of 75 jobs.

On a positive note:-

\* Stockton-based engineering company, Aker Solutions, recently revealed it was close to signing a major new contract. The company, which employed 600 staff, was also currently recruiting another 50, which would be based at its Teesside and Warrington offices.

\* R&A Kay Inspection Services in Stockton, had achieved its five year targets in 18 months and was taking on 15 new members of staff, taking the number of inspectors employed by them to 65.

\* Darchem Engineering, suppliers to the aerospace, defence and nuclear industries, was expanding its Stillington facilities, with the possibility of new jobs.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the work being undertaken be supported.

**CAB  
150/09**

**Corus**

Cabinet considered a report relating to the announcement on 4th December 2009 that the Redcar blast furnace, Lackenby steelmaking and the South Bank coke ovens would be mothballed at the end of January 2010 with the loss of 1700 jobs.

The Leader (Chair) had requested that this report be presented at the meeting due to its urgent nature and significance to the Borough.

Cabinet had received regular Economic climate reports since December 2008 which had included frequent updates on the Corus situation in the Tees Valley.

Announcements were made in February 2009 that Corus was to lose 2500 jobs in the UK, however at the time it was also stated that a buyer was to take a majority share in the Redcar plant which would see it secure to 2014.

In May/June 2009 it was reported that a consortium of purchasers of steel from the plant had pulled out of the agreement, placing the future of the plant at risk.

A response Group was established in May 2009 of the key stakeholder public, private, and employee groups to work with Corus, to support the workforce, and seek strategic input into helping secure the future of the operation in Redcar.

The group had been chaired by One North East (the Regional Development Agency) and included TVU representing the five Tees Valley Local Authorities taking a central and active part in the work of this group.

In addition the group had included, trade unions, Engineering Employers Federation, Business Link NE, Government Office, Vera Baird MP amongst others.

The group agreed on 6 work streams of concentrated activity/planning which are ; HR/Workforce , Supply Chain, Communications, Investment Acceleration, Strategic Economic Impact, and Community Impact. TVU/TVR had led on three of the task groups handling the work streams. Some of the key issues explored and plans in place included:-

\* Apprenticeships, and continuing the learning and employment opportunities for young people, numbers of JCP advisers available to hold on-site surgeries and advice clinics if necessary, available funds from a variety of sources to support the workforce through training etc, analysis of supply chain businesses and likely impact, current inward investment projects and opportunities to facilitate securing them, impact on families, benefits advice etc.

364 main suppliers had been identified of which 98 were in the North East, and 8 had a high dependency on Corus as a customer. A meeting was arranged with BENE to further establish the local supplier impact and support to be provided to those businesses.

Of the initial 2000 planned job losses originally indicated, at that time Middlesbrough and Redcar residents represented the highest numbers affected, with Stockton numbers being 228. As people were still seeking to preserve the plant, and negotiations were underway with Trades Unions it was not possible to identify further detail of who would be affected until further consultation was completed. It was also unlikely that the JCP led response and advice team for the workforce would be going on site before Christmas for the same reasons, but was resourced and ready to go.

An emergency enquiry had been launched, for completion by end of January 2010, by the North East Regional Committee of the House of Commons, into both help for the workforce as well as what can be done to prevent the plant's closure, and its impact on the region's economy. They were seeking written and oral responses during January.

Vera Baird MP had been involved in meetings with the purchasing consortium to press for reinstatement of their commitments. Local MPs had written to Government departments asking what procurement they could bring forward to create demands for steel.

The company and its employees had been leading on investigating efficiencies to improve cost competitiveness of the product.

The unions and MPs were leading on continuing to seek interest from potential buyers of the plant and operation.

Latest statements were that it was planned to mothball the plant, which involved a gradual shutdown of the furnace. This meant that it could be brought back into use should the current situation change, however, the longer it remained in this state the more prohibitive the cost and difficulty of recommencing production at a future time.

In light of some of the recent press comment and speculation about gains that may benefit the company closure through Carbon Trading allowances, Vera Baird was pursuing clarity from the Environment Agency as to the factual position in terms of this possible issue.

Government announced a £60m support package for Tees Valley on the back of the Corus situation combined with difficulties facing parts of the Chemicals Industry in the Tees Valley. Some of the funding would directly support the work of the Corus response group. Around £10m was for apprenticeships and support for people to start businesses. The enterprise element would be targeted primarily at redundant workers. Up to £20m would be invested in Wilton International to strengthen and sustain competitiveness and employment. The remaining £30m would be used to help Tees Valley businesses move beyond traditional heavy industry to become part of the low carbon economy. Investments would spread across a range of interventions but were likely to include land and infrastructure, bio-based technologies, reducing energy use and carbon capture and storage.

Cabinet discussed issues surrounding the announcement and particularly the effects it would have on workers employed by Corus and those employed by companies in the supply chain to Corus. Cabinet also discussed the significant effect on the Tees Valley local economy.

The Leader of the Council asked Cabinet to agree the following all party statement on behalf of the Council with regards to the announcement by Corus:-

“Stockton Borough Council wishes to express its disappointment and concern at the announcement by Corus, part of the global Tata Steel group, that they intend to “mothball” the Teesside Cast Product’s blast furnace facility at Redcar at the end of January 2010 with the loss of 1700 jobs.

The Council recognises the importance of steel making in Tees Valley, and the region, and supports the work force in calling on the Government to do all in its power to ensure that steel production is retained in the Tees Valley.

The Council does acknowledge the injection of finance to support the future development opportunities in the low carbon and manufacturing sectors and supports Tees Valley Unlimited in its efforts to safeguard the Corus workforce and the thousands of local jobs in the supply industries. However, government

should continue to search for a long term solution and ensure, as far as possible, that the skill base is retained to allow the plant to be re-commissioned as soon as markets for the plant's products are identified."

RESOLVED that:-

1. the update and work that has taken place in respect of the Corus situation in the Tees Valley be noted.
2. the all party statement of support be agreed.

**CAB**  
**151/09**      **Sustainable Construction Policy**

Cabinet considered a report that presented a draft sustainable construction policy that sets out the framework through which Stockton Council would be able to meet the requirements of a number of national, regional and local policies that aim to achieve sustainable development. A copy of the draft report was provided for Members' consideration.

It was a policy that would be applicable to all new build commissioned on behalf of the Council as well as major refurbishment schemes, extensions to existing buildings, highway construction and maintenance as well as significant civil engineering projects.

The delivery of the policy would be achieved by adopting a range of design criteria such as the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and the Design Quality Indicator approach.

Implementation of the policy would see a significant contribution towards reducing the Council's carbon footprint and meeting our climate change obligations both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.

The policy would be applicable to:-

- \* All new build commissioned by or on behalf of the council;
- \* All major refurbishment of buildings owned by the council;
- \* Extensions to buildings owned by the council with a value of £500,000 or above;
- \* Highway constructions and maintenance schemes;
- \* Significant civil engineering projects;

Cabinet noted that it was proposed that the policy be applied to all new projects that met the above criteria from 1 April 2010.

Monitoring the outcomes from the policy would be through a series of indicators that were already in place, eg National Indicator 185 CO2 emissions from Council operations as well as some new measures, eg the percentage of material recycled from construction sites.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the draft sustainable construction policy be adopted as a delivery mechanism to achieve sustainable development in construction schemes delivered on behalf of the Council.
2. Performance against the policy be subject to annual reporting.
3. The policy be applicable to projects commissioned from 1 April 2010.

**CAB  
152/09**     **Renewable Energy Strategy**

Cabinet was presented with a Renewable Energy Strategy for consideration.

It was explained that the stability of energy supplies derived from fossil fuels could no longer be relied upon due to price volatility, an overall substantive increase in grid electricity and gas prices and the requirement to contribute to Government carbon reduction budgets. The use of renewable energy supply therefore needed to become an important part of the Council's approach to meeting future energy demands.

Under the carbon management programme Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had committed to a 25% reduction in carbon emissions by 2013 whilst central Government had set greenhouse gas reduction targets of 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. These levels of carbon emission reduction would only be achieved by a move away from carbon rich fossil fuels towards renewable and other sustainable energy supplies

To this end a Renewable Energy Strategy had been developed for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council that explained the drivers for renewables, the practicable means of introducing renewable energy supply and the technologies and routes to reducing the Council's dependency on fossil fuels.

The Renewable Energy Strategy would support the Climate Change Action Plan, Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, Sustainable Construction and national policies on carbon emissions reduction. The strategy focused upon the authority's own use of energy and was not a planning policy document. Policies relating to renewable energy were being dealt with through the Local Development Framework and associated planning policies.

This strategy was concerned with energy use in buildings and identified potential means of delivering both renewable electricity and renewable heat by a variety of means including significant input from off-site renewable energy generation.

This document provided a route map to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council becoming increasingly self sufficient in low carbon energy supply providing increased security of supply and cost as well as reducing the carbon emissions associated with Council operations.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the content of the Renewable Energy Strategy, as provided to members, be

noted.

2. the Renewable Energy Strategy be agreed as a delivery mechanism to reduce carbon emissions derived from the Council's energy consumption.

**CAB  
153/09**      **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:-

Economic Regeneration and Transport - 15 July 2009

Economic Regeneration and Transport - 30 September 2009

**CAB  
154/09**      **Stockton International Riverside Festival 2009**

Cabinet considered a report that provided feedback from and reflected on the successes of the 2009 Festival. A short promotional DVD, showing highlights from the festival, was played at the meeting.

Members noted the results of survey undertaken following the Festival.

- \* Overall visitor satisfaction was 92.1% compared with 96.2% in 2008.
- \* 77.9% of visitors said the Festival has a positive effect on Stockton's image
- \* 1,094 participants and 54 groups participated in the Community Carnival, with every ward in the borough represented.
- \* 17 new groups and 13 diverse groups were involved.
- \* SIRF and Fringe combined presented more than 240 performances to estimated audiences of over 180,000 people
- \* Mean spend per capita £35.72 compared with £41.70 in 2008.

Brief details of the Programme were provided including those attractions that had been most popular.

Particular reference was made to the Carnival and issues surrounding it. The scale of the Carnival brought its own challenges in terms of duration of road closure required to take participants safely across Yarm Lane onto Trinity Green. The Council appreciated the inconvenience that this caused and made every effort to minimise the disruption to traffic and buses. On balance, it was considered that the benefits to participants and spectators justified the disruption, and Cabinet supported the continued growth of the Carnival. However, further analysis of routes and strategies to minimise public transport delays was required. The multi partner group, with representation from a range of Council services along with bus operators, emergency services and other stakeholders, had begun to look in detail at issues arising from SIRF 09, and the ways in which arrangements could be improved.

The Carnival had attracted many compliments and it was rewarding to receive positive comments from national arts policy makers. It was suggested that the Carnival could be in a position to represent the North East in the Cultural Olympiad celebrations 2012.

The decision to take more responsibility for the key elements of the Festival within the Council rather than outsource to external organisations proved very successful. Whilst artistic direction was still contracted out, the Arts Development Manager/ Festival Co-ordinator was responsible for confirming and authorising all programme, and for procurement of services and spend for the Festival.

SIRF had long been supported by a number of Council departments such as PR, traffic management, cleansing, health and safety, risk management and insurance. This year we made additional demands on Council services, in particular Legal Services for contracts, Financial Services and Town Centre Management. It was considered that the Services involved felt a real sense of ownership and pride in managing the complexities of presenting a successful SIRF.

Members were reminded that for the past two years SIRF had been participating in a pilot project to improve the accessibility of the festival to disabled audiences. The Council worked with disability arts campaigner and service provider, Attitude is Everything, as part of their Disability Access Audit and Toolkit partnership project with the Independent Street Arts Network (ISAN) and part funded by Arts Council England. The findings from the audit were used to produce a SIRF Disability Access Action Plan 2009 – 2013 and included as a case study in the national Access Toolkit. A mystery shopper from Attitude is Everything gave the festival a glowing report and members present at the meeting provided very positive comments in this area.

Members noted that the Festival had operated within very tight financial controls and was delivered on budget.

The VIP area shared between SIRF and the Fringe worked well and demonstrated cohesion between the Festivals. For an event of this size and reputation, the hospitality was modest and designed to enable SIRF and Fringe to attract sponsors and create a positive impression of the Town amongst key opinion formers. Whilst the hospitality was a great success overall, it did attract some criticism. Consideration would be given to the nature of this provision in the future, particularly in relation to the wider economic climate.

It was explained that in response to ongoing financial pressures officers were exploring the potential for charging for part or all of the Festival, though at a level which would not prevent disadvantaged communities from enjoying the event. In addition there were ongoing pressures on spaces in the town, between the needs of SIRF and those of the other users and functions of the town centre.

Cabinet agreed that 2009, 22nd Stockton International Riverside Festival and 19th Stockton Riverside Fringe had been extremely successful, continuing high visitor satisfaction ratings, positive impact on Stockton's image and significant economic benefits for the town. SIRF 09 delivered more of the organisation in house, brought together more Council services, achieved new heights in disabled access and presented arguably the best ever finale.

RESOLVED that:-



1. the success and feedback of this year's Festival be noted.
2. the principal of continued growth of the Carnival , and the exploration of strategies to limit disruptions to traffic that arise from the procession be supported.

**CAB  
155/09 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

Members considered a report that presented the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Cabinet noted that the SHLAA was an essential part of the evidence base for the LDF. It was important to note that it was a technical exercise and that an assessment of a site as deliverable or developable in no way inferred that planning permission for housing development would be granted on the site or that the site would ever be allocated for housing. The purpose of the SHLAA was to determine potential housing sites. It was for the plan-making process to determine which sites were allocated.

The first Stockton-on-Tees SHLAA was published in October 2008. The national Practice Guidance stated that the assessment, once completed should be regularly updated (at least annually) as part of the Annual Monitoring Report exercise, to support the updating of the housing trajectory and the five-year supply of specific deliverable sites.

The broad methodology for carrying out a SHLAA was set out in the national Practice Guidance. The national Practice Guidance set out 10 steps needed to complete a SHLAA but it did not provide the detail for all of those. The Tees Valley authorities had, in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), produced the Tees Valley SHLAA Implementation Guide to provide the detail (published in February 2008). This work also contributed to the development of the North East SHLAA Regional Implementation Guide (published in March 2008) ensuring that the two guides were closely aligned.

The national Practice Guidance required that key stakeholders should be involved at the outset of the Assessment, so that they could help shape the approach to be taken. Therefore, as with the 2008 SHLAA, a steering group had been established with representatives from the HBF, RSLs, a land and property agent/surveyor and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust as well as from the Council's Spatial Planning, Development Services and Regeneration teams.

The steering group met on 15th December 2008 to agree the process for producing the 2009 SHLAA. It was agreed that it would include a highways workshop, an internal stakeholder workshop and a key stakeholder event. It was also agreed that the key stakeholder event should form part of a consultation period in which LDF consultees would also be given the opportunity to comment on the internal stakeholder site assessments.

The consultation period ran from 8th May to 12th June 2009. Both public and professional consultees had the opportunity to comment through e-mail or written comments. The key stakeholder event was ran as a "drop-in" event and held on 1st June.

Following the close of the consultation period and the holding of the key stakeholder event the steering group met on 23rd June 2009 in order to come to a conclusion about any “contentious” sites. A site was regarded as contentious if comments were received through the consultation process that express a different view from the internal stakeholder assessment. Minutes of the steering group were provided to members as was a schedule of comments received during the consultation period, together with the steering group responses.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that:-**

- 1. the contents of the report be noted.**
- 2. the Stockton-on-Tees 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Report be approved for publication.**