

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 17th February, 2011.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

Officers: N. Schneider (CE); J. Danks, L. King, A. Kelly, B. Brown (R); P. Dobson, J. McCann, J. Nixon, C. Straughan, A. Brown, C. Wood, P. Diggins (DNS), D. Bond, M. Waggott, M. Henderson, P. Mennear, J. Trainer, M. Jones (LD); J. Humphreys, P. Seller, T. Frank (CESC)

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Cains and Cllr Eddy

Apologies:

CAB Declarations of Interest

149/10

Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Mrs McCoy, Coleman, Nelson, Beall and Cook declared personal non-prejudicial interests in the item entitled EIT Review – School Catering, as they were school governors.

Councillor Lupton declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled EIT Review – Youth Services as he served on a Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor Laing declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled EIT Review – Youth Services as he served on a Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled EIT Review – Youth Services as he served on a Community Centre Management Committee.

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item entitled EIT Review – Youth Services as she served on Kirklevington Village Hall Management Committee. Councillor Mrs Beaumont made a statement to Cabinet then left the meeting room prior to discussion and voting on the item.

Cllr Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled appointment of Local Authority Representatives on Schools Governing Bodies as he was a nominee for one of the positions.

Councillor Mrs McCoy and Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled Economic Climate Update Report as they served on the Stockton and District Advice and Information Service Board

CAB Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation - School Catering

150/10

Members considered a report that presented the findings of the EIT review of School Catering undertaken by the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee between June 2010 and January 2011.

The Select Committee's review examined the provision of a catering service in 59 primary schools, one secondary school, and three special needs schools

within the Borough. Although the service received an income from the schools and from the parents of children it provided lunches to, this income did not cover its cost and the Authority provided a subsidy. Therefore, the overall aims of the review were to identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that would deliver efficiency savings to reduce the subsidy while sustaining / improving high quality outcomes for SBC residents

It was explained that Council's Medium Term Financial Plan allocated an annual rise of 5p per meal to cope with inflationary pressures. Historically, when there was an increase in the cost of the school meal the uptake of meals decreased, however, this was a temporary decrease and uptake generally recovered after approximately a half school term.

The Committee believed that a further increase was necessary, however was mindful of the pressure on larger families and did not wish to increase the cost to the extent that it discouraged take up of a school meal. Therefore, the Committee proposed that the price of a school meal should be increased to £1.95 from September 2011.

The Committee considered that by reviewing staffing guide scales and allowances to increase efficiency and reduce the amount of added value work within each school, savings could be achieved to reduce the subsidy the service received while still providing a quality service to the schools, and a healthy, nutritious meal to pupils.

The Committee had looked at the 'added value' work undertaken by the catering service and appreciated that this work supported both the Obesity Strategy and the Authority's objective to promote healthy lifestyles. However, it was felt that the number of projects carried out in each school could be reduced, without having a significant impact on the service provided to each school. A revised and reduced Management Structure had been produced and reflected the reduced service delivery and direct support offered to Schools as part of this review. The reduced Management Structure was proposed to bring forward significant efficiencies.

Cabinet noted that an action plan would be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations would be implemented.

RESOLVED that

1. the price of a school meal be increased to £1.95 from September 2011.
2. the staffing guide scale and kitchen allowances hours be reduced as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.
3. a revised management structure as set out in Appendix 4 of the report be implemented.
4. as part of negotiations for SLAs for School Catering to start in 2012/13, officers discuss with schools options such as service development and increasing uptake to reduce the resource allocations subsidy.

CAB **EIT Review of Youth Services**
151/10

Cabinet was reminded that a report relating to an Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation review of Youth Services was reported by the Children and Young People Select Committee to Cabinet on 16 December 2010. Cabinet approved the report and agreed the recommendations.

Members noted one of the resolutions: -

that, recognising that there are currently a large number of universal youth club settings with several of these being poorly attended:

- a. the provision of universal youth services be reconfigured around a smaller number of high quality settings; those settings to be identified through the application of the matrix at appendix 2 to assess the sustainability based upon factors which include attendance, footfall, footfall costs, potential reach and deprivation;
- b. final decisions on service reconfiguration be made by Cabinet taking the matrix into account but also other relevant factors including available finance, geographical spread and wider youth provision;
- c. prior to implementation, Children and Young People Select Committee be consulted on the service reconfiguration at its meeting on 9 March 2011 (or earlier if appropriate), together with an action plan as part of the monitoring of the review;

It was explained that ward councillors had been consulted through 4 separate meetings based on the Area Partnership clusters and 15 councillors attended. All councillors were given the opportunity for further discussion with officers, if they were not able to attend one of the briefings. A range of issues were identified by councillors in attendance. The key issues arising were about concerns for particular areas across the borough, where there would be a lack of presence of an actual youth club setting, issues around accessibility of services from some of the rural areas and small villages and a need to ensure those settings with high usage continue. A particular issue arose around the impact on some settings, if the youth service element was no longer being delivered and whether the EIT review of assets should be more closely aligned with this review.

Cabinet noted that a final decisions had not been made around "myplace", though it was anticipated that if it went ahead in some form, that an element of youth provision would be identified as part of the proposals. If it did not go ahead, then alternative arrangements would be considered to support delivery within the area.

The matrix of factors had been used to identify a rank order for prioritising which settings should be maintained for the delivery of universal services. Highest ranking across all the factors was presented first with the lowest ranking presented last. Consideration was given to the issue of the possible weighting of the factors in the matrix. The Children and Young People's Select Committee agreed to the factors being equally weighted, but that consideration would also

be given to other relevant factors, including finance, geographical spread and wider youth provision. In using the matrix and in consideration of those other factors, including the comments by ward councillors, proposals were identified and were presented to Cabinet for consideration.

Members were informed that the financial savings to be identified from this review were £210k.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the proposed settings for the continuation of the delivery of universal youth service, as identified in the body of the report, be agreed.
2. delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Children and Young People, to progress a restructuring of universal youth services in line with supporting the identified settings and meeting the required savings, identified for this review.
3. prior to implementation, the Children and Young People Select Committee be consulted on the service reconfiguration at its meeting on 9 March 2011.
4. consultation take place with staff and union representatives on the proposals for restructuring of the service in line with due process, following the meeting of the Select Committee on 9 March 2011.
5. the proposals on restructuring of universal youth services be aligned with proposals on restructuring of the Integrated Youth Support Service, which is subject to separate reporting.

CAB 152/10 Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation - Review of Integrated Youth Support Service: Connexions, Targeted Youth Support and Preventions

Cabinet considered a report that presented the findings of the EIT Task and Finish review of Integrated Youth Support Service (Connexions, Targeted Youth Support and Preventions).

The review included Information, Advice, Guidance and related support services funded through Connexions budget. The review also included targeted services core funded through Youth Service and not included in the CYP Youth Review of Universal services, and Preventions activity funded through a combination of Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) grants.

The overall aims of the review were:

- To review the effectiveness of the service structure and delivery model of these services to young people, taking account of the emerging policy direction at a national level.
- To identify possible options for the way in which the service was delivered.

Cabinet noted that the services within this review, namely Connexions,

Targeted Youth Support and Preventions were key front line services for young people enabling and supporting them to make the most of their potential and raising aspirations. The services were preventative in nature benefiting both local communities and the local economy. The services were well managed and high performing with a high level of customer satisfaction.

In considering the options for this review it was recognised that significant changes had already been made in order to align services into a coherent and co-ordinated youth support service, including universal youth service and Youth Offending Service. Recent structural changes were already evidencing significant outcomes in terms of the impact on young people and their families.

However, given emerging Government policy and the financial limitations arising from the CSR and Early Intervention Grant announcements further development was needed on the youth agenda in terms of delivering on outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

To that end, it was recommended that the services within the review be re-structured to meet an agreed savings target whilst fulfilling key priorities.

It was also important that future service developments built upon the excellent existing partnership arrangements with the voluntary and community sector, including commissioning and small grants awards.

The restructure of these services would entail losing a number of posts and some redundancies were likely. However by pooling resources from the Youth Review with the allocated funding for young people's services from the Early Intervention Grant it was anticipated that efficiencies and reducing duplication would minimise compulsory redundancies as far as possible. In addition a full review of the options for staff terms and conditions will contribute to potential savings.

RESOLVED that:-

1. delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, to re-structure the Integrated Youth Support Service as part of the wider EIT review of Early Intervention Grant services with an agreed level of annual savings to be determined.

2. given the alignment and shared priorities with the Universal Youth Service, the restructure of these services take account of the outcome of the CYP Select Committee Youth Review including the estimated annual savings of £210,000 from that review.

The revised structure would fulfil a number of key priorities around services for young people:

- Delivery of Universal Youth Service (via recommendations of the Youth Review).
- Delivery of Targeted Youth Support to reduce risk taking behaviour preventing Anti Social Behaviour, Offending, Substance Misuse and Teenage Pregnancy

and contributing to reducing NEETs (Not in Education, Employment and Training). This will include engaging vulnerable young people in Positive Activities.

- Tracking and monitoring of young people from leaving school to age 18 (19 for vulnerable groups).

- A targeted support service to enable all young people including those in vulnerable groups (up to age 25 for those with LDD) to engage and participate in Education, Employment and Training, and support the achievement of Raising the Participation Age (to include Information, Advice and Guidance approaches for Tier 1 and Tier 2 clients).

- To encourage more young people to be involved in volunteering, citizenship and participation activities.

3. officers pursue opportunities, where appropriate and subject to funding, for further collaboration with the voluntary and community sector and private sector in providing services, including consideration of commissioning opportunities.

4. transitional arrangements are made for Careers Advice and Guidance to ensure that the Local Authority's statutory responsibility is delivered until that responsibility passes to schools from 2012.

CAB **LA Nominations**
153/10

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 nomination to school Governing Body as detailed within the report.

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

Bader Primary School – Daniel Johnson
Billingham South Primary School – Cllr B Cook
Crooksbar Primary School – Matthew Vickers
Junction Farm Primary School – Mr M. Medd
Kirklevington Primary School – Mrs C. Farrimond
St Gregory's Catholic Primary School – Mr M. McPartland
Yarm Primary School – Mr P. Addison

CAB **Economic Climate Update Report**
154/10

Cabinet considered a monthly update report providing 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.

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

CAB **Review of Choice Based Allocations Policy**
155/10

Cabinet noted that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was a member of the Compass Scheme. This was a sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, which operated social housing lettings throughout the Tees Valley.

In addition to Stockton Borough Council, the Compass partnership was comprised of:

- a) Tristar Homes
- b) Erimus Housing
- c) Middlesbrough Council
- d) Hartlepool Borough Council
- e) Housing Hartlepool
- f) Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- g) Coast & Country
- h) Darlington Borough Council

The partnership developed and agreed a common allocations policy which had been in operation since July 2009 and an agreement was made to review the policy after 6 months to ensure that it was relevant in respect of Government guidance and legislation and fit for purpose in respect of delivery and meeting objectives. A sub-regional task group was formed to carry out this review, and a programme developed for reviewing all sections of the policy.

The proposed amendments to the policy were subject to extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and the responses and comments received influenced the final proposals.

Members were provided with a copy of the consultation report including the proposed amendments.

It was noted that a number of social housing reform measures had been proposed by the Government, in the recent Communities & Local Government consultation paper, "Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing". A number of key changes were proposed to allocations' frameworks, to ensure they were aligned with local priorities. These include:

- i. the introduction of fixed term tenancies for new housing association tenants, although certain tenants may be offered longer or tenancies on existing terms if they are transferring;
- ii. for tenants whose fixed term tenancies are due to end, assistance may be given to enable them to access either private rented or low cost home ownership accommodation;
- iii. empty properties that are brought back into use may be leased by housing associations and offered as social housing tenancies;
- iv. applicants to whom a homelessness duty is accepted may be offered short term fixed tenancies within the private rented sector; and,
- v. social housing waiting lists may be limited only to those who have an urgent or high need for re-housing.

It was likely that a future policy review needed to be undertaken to consider the

reforms that were agreed following consultation, and how they would be implemented at a local level within the policy framework.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the choice based allocations policy be approved but will not be implemented until consideration is given to any further policy changes arising from the consultation paper 'A Fairer Future For Social Housing' which is anticipated early May 2011. The reason for this is the cost of potentially two separate IT system updates.

CAB 156/10 Regional Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community

Cabinet noted that the North East Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee had been established in September 2010. Members were provided with a report that represented the results of a substantial, pro-active scrutiny project that had been undertaken by the Joint Committee. As chair of Health Select Committee, Councillor Ann Cains represented Stockton Council on the Committee, which Cllr Cains also chaired.

Cabinet noted a summary of the outcomes and recommendations from the review including reference to physical needs, mental health and socio-economic issues.

It was explained that the Joint Committee's review had been concerned with ensuring that ex-service personnel are receiving their entitlement to equality of access to service provision, and that they were not disadvantaged by their service in the Armed Forces. In addition, Members had noted that in some cases (for example, NHS provision of prosthetic limbs) additional priority had been granted, and that greater awareness was needed to promote such services.

It was noted that most ex-service personnel experience very few problems when they transition back to civilian life. However some specific groups did encounter difficulty (for example, some early service leavers), and some experience problems many years down the line after their discharge. There were also significant issues in relation to the quality of data in relation to ex-service personnel.

A range of services dedicated to the ex-service community already existed and these were often provided by the voluntary and community sector. Better co-ordination and sign-posting to these had been identified as a requirement and was the basis for a number of the recommendations. In some cases, if such services were promoted more widely, they could lighten the load on other statutory services.

Within the context of a regional project involving discussion amongst Members from all 12 authorities, the Joint Committee had identified 47 recommendations.

As this was a regional project, the report was being submitted to each of the region's local authority Executives. There were 27 recommendations aimed at local authorities, either to be implemented directly or in partnership with others. In addition there were a number of recommendations aimed at partner organisations.

It was proposed by the Joint Committee that an Action Plan be formulated in order to co-ordinate the response to the report. In order to provide a focus for this process, and to launch the report itself, the Joint Committee propose to hold an event, provisionally scheduled for March, in order to invite relevant organisations to discuss taking forward the recommendations.

RESOLVED that

1. the Regional Joint Committee's report be supported in principle, and it be agreed that the recommendations for local authorities be assessed in terms of how they could be taken forward by Stockton Council, in partnership with relevant organisations, where appropriate.

2. the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, and Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services, be authorised to agree the actions relevant to Stockton Council, in conjunction with the Joint Committee, and to implement these in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members and the Corporate Director of Resources.

CAB 157/10 Employee Survey 2010 - Feedback

Members considered a report relating to the Council's Employee Survey 2010. The Survey was undertaken between 8th October – 5th November 2010 and included 3,974 employees.

The survey was primarily undertaken on-line. In addition paper surveys were made available to those without Internet access. KYIT was used for a month before the survey, to publicise the survey and throughout to maintain momentum.

In total 2,385 surveys were completed giving an overall response rate of 60%. This compared with a response rate of 44% in 2008. The high response rates means that the statistical confidence in the data was strong.

The areas within the 2008 survey that were subject to focus group discussions and improvement plans related to Communication, Learning and Development and Bullying and harassment. These had all shown improvements in the 2010 survey. Detailed improvements were provided in an appendix to the report but it was noted that comparisons were not possible against all areas of survey due to new questions and/or question changes to improve analysis.

The Committee noted some of the key messages to come from the survey. These included:-

- High levels of agreement that employees were clear what they had to do and how their job fitted in. On the whole employees felt their skills and abilities were used and that they were challenged, but interested by their work and achieved a sense of personal accomplishment.
- Fifteen per cent of employees had experienced bullying from either an employee or member of the public. This was a reduction from the 29% in 2008. (Employee).

- 52% (net) of employees felt that when change was being considered their views were listened to.
- While the figures for the number of people who had had an appraisal in the previous twelve months were relatively high at 82% net (although different from that reported through to HR) only 56% of staff responding agreed that they found their appraisal useful.
- Overall communications were the lowest scoring thematic area with the highest net score being 68% for being kept informed about matters 'that affect me'
- Overall the responses in relation to people's views about working for the Council were high ranging from 86% enjoying working for the Council to 64% thinking the Council took a genuine interest in the well-being of employees.
- Positive results were evident in the main for relationships and resources with net scores as high as 90% for employees receiving effective support from their colleagues, 87% for having a clear set of performance objectives. However there are slightly lower numbers in net agreement in relation to poor performance not being accepted (66%), comfort with the amount of work expected (66%) and even lower was the time available to perform expected tasks (49%).

Members noted the key issues arising from the 2010 Employee Survey:-

- Change management
- Working and communication between departments
- Appraisals and their perceived effectiveness.
- Policies for promotion
- Regular and helpful feedback to staff/recognising good work
- Confidence and understanding of bullying policies, particularly related to employee bullying
- Managing amount of work and tackling poor performance

Cabinet noted what arrangements were in place to deal with the issues identified through the survey.

RESOLVED that

1. the improvements across all aspects of the Survey since 2008 be noted
2. all Members are made aware of the Employee Survey and proposed actions.

CAB **Minutes of Various Bodies**
158/10

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:-

The Western Area Partnership – 26 July 2010
The Western Area Partnership – 27 September 2010
The Eastern Area Partnership – 28 September 2010
The Western Area Partnership – 25 October 2010
Leadership Board – 9 November 2010
Safer Stockton Partnership – 9 November 2010
Local Safeguarding Children Board – 18 November 2010
Stockton Renaissance – 7 December 2010
Central Area Partnership – 16 December 2010
Northern Area Partnership – 10 January 2011
Economic Regeneration and Transport Partnership – 12 January 2011

CAB 159/10 PROTOCOL ON DECISIONS CONTRARY TO OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet considered a report relating to a protocol on decisions contrary to officer recommendations.

The protocol on decisions contrary to officer recommendations was introduced to give an opportunity for Members to try a new approach to decision making which allowed time for further consideration of those decisions where officers determined that there were insufficient planning grounds, or evidence, to support the Planning Committee's decision.

The protocol had been accepted subject to a review 12 months after its implementation..

Members noted that since the protocol had been agreed there had been three occasions when it has been used.

It was considered that the protocol had not removed or diluted the democratic rights of committee members to determine a decision as they thought fit but allowed further time for consideration, reflection and investigation.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transportation Councillor Cook and the Planning Committee supported the continuation of the Protocol.

RECOMMENDED that the continuation of the protocol be approved.

CAB 160/10 Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members 2011-2015

Consideration was given to a report that presented the revised Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members highlighting the journey Elected Member Development had made since the original Learning and Development Strategy was agreed in 2006 and detailed the achievements gained since the authority was awarded Charter Status in 2007.

A major part of the refresh of the Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members was the revised Induction Programme for members, which would take place following the Local Government Elections in May 2011..

Following the Local Government Elections in May 2011, there would be a number of new Councillors. It was therefore important that a robust and

appropriate Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members was established which detailed the Council's commitment to providing appropriate learning and development opportunities for all Councillors and set out the Council's approach to this. This Strategy and its commitment to Elected Member Learning and Development would be evaluated during the inspection process for Charter Plus.

The Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members would provide members with the opportunity to gain a firmer understanding of their roles, the functions of the Council and the opportunity to engage in their on-going personal development.

A copy of the Learning and Development strategy for Elected Members 2011 – 2015 and the Induction Programme for Elected Members 2011, was provided.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Learning and Development Strategy for Elected Members 2011 – 2015 be approved