

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 6th September, 2012.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr David Rose, Cllr Michael Smith

Officers: N. Schneider (CEO); J. Danks, L. King, B. Brown, (R); Paul Dobson, R. Poundford (DNS); J. Humphreys, L. Brown, L. Hobson, S. McLurg (CESC); J. Grant, P. Mennear, M. Henderson (LD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Tracey Stott

Apologies:

CAB 56/12 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest in the item entitled Stockton Armed Forces Community Covenant... as he had a family member who was a member of the Armed Forces.

Councillor Cook and Beall declared personal interests in the item entitled Review of Membership to Outside Bodies, as they were members of the Association of North East Councils

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal interest in the item entitled Review of Membership to Outside Bodies, as she was a member of the North East Regional Employers Organisation

Councillor Harrington declared a declared a personal interest in the item entitled Review of Membership to Outside Bodies, as he was a member of the North East Purchasing Organisation.

Councillor Rose declared a declared a personal interest in the item entitled Review of Membership to Outside Bodies, as he was a member of the LGA Inland Floods Risk Group.

Cllr Cook declared a personal interest in the item entitled Northshore Development Progress Update as he served on the European Regional Development Fund Local Management Board.

Councillors Mrs McCoy and Nelson declared a personal interest in the item entitled Social Fund Localisation as they were members of the Stockton and District Advice and Information Service.

Councillor Beall declared a personal interest in the item entitled Youth Participation as he was Chairman of the East Ravens Trust Board.

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in the item entitled Economic Climate, as his employer was mentioned in the report.

CAB 57/12 **Minutes of the meetings held on 11 July 2012 and 9 August 2012.**

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 July 2012 and 9 August 2012 were

confirmed as a correct record.

CAB **Review of Membership to Outside Bodies**

58/12

Members considered a report that presented the findings of the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee following the review of Outside Bodies.

It was explained that a request was made to Stockton Council's Executive Scrutiny to consider including a Task and Finish review of the LGA benefits as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme. The full Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee undertook this task looking also at other outside bodies to which the Council subscribed, examining value for money and the benefits of membership for Stockton Council.

Members had examined financial elements of membership of relevant bodies and received evidence from officers and members about perceived strengths and weaknesses of such membership to determine a view for the Council's continued involvement.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Stockton Council maintain its membership to the six outside bodies scoped in this review.
2. Stockton Council continues to use the system of a rolling notice for membership to the LGA and that the Chief Executive write informing the LGA annually.
3. Specific criteria be developed and applied to determine the membership of all outside bodies and professional organisations.
4. Negotiations with ANEC are undertaken to address value for money concerns of the Committee.
5. A review of the management and effectiveness of NEPO activity be pursued by appropriate officers of this Council.
6. Improvement to the circulation and sharing of information and learning from membership to outside bodies be developed utilising all available resources such as the Council's Intranet.

CAB **LA nominations**

59/12

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:-

Harewood Primary School – Mrs A Emerson
Preston Primary School – Mrs Blyth
St Michael's RC VA Comprehensive School – Mrs P Chambers
St Patrick's RC Primary School – Mr G Wilson

**CAB
60/12** **School Attainment 2011-12**

Members considered a report that presented an analysis of school performance in the academic year 2011.

Cabinet received information relating to each phase and key stage and noted headline outcomes and key areas for development. Members also noted inspection outcomes.

Members noted performance had generally been positive.

RESOLVED that the standards and achievements, as detailed in the report, from across the Borough, be noted.

**CAB
61/12** **Children's Social Care Workload Pressures**

Members received a report that updated Cabinet on the pressures relating to significant and continuing increases in children's social care workload which could potentially impact on the Council's ability to effectively safeguard children.

Members were provided with data relating to referrals and assessments, child protection and the looked after system.

Members were also provided with details of staffing and allocation as well as budgetary issues and an update on the EIT Review of Child Placements.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the continued workload pressures within the social care system and the associated impact this was having on caseloads, performance and budget be noted.
2. further update reports be presented, on a quarterly basis, in order to continue to monitor the impact of these workload pressures.

**CAB
62/12** **Economic Climate Report**

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.

Members noted some of the positive and negative developments since the last report. Details of the support on offer to people and businesses was also

provided.

Particular reference was made to the recent announcement, by Direct Line, that it would be closing its call centre in Thornaby, with the loss of over 500 jobs. It was explained that the announcement had come as a complete shock, with no previous indication by the company. The Council had written to Direct Line with a view to discussing an action plan. The Council would be taking the lead on trying to support those affected but other partners in this were likely to include Tees Valley Unlimited, Job Centre Plus, Stockton Riverside College, Chamber of Commerce.

RESOLVED that the content of the report, and initial planned response to the Direct Line announcement be noted and the work being undertaken supported.

CAB **NORTHSHORE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS UPDATE**
63/12

Members received a report that updated Cabinet on the success and positive progress made in the development of Northshore, as well as the additional opportunities being advanced.

It was explained that Phase 1 of the Homezone commenced on site in March 2011 and was scheduled for completion on 4th September 2012. This first phase would see 50 properties delivered on the site offering a range of two, three and four bedroom properties. To date, 12 social/affordable rent properties had been transferred to Fabrick and a further 16 properties had either legally completed or exchanged contracts, which demonstrated positive sales activity despite tough market conditions. To raise the profile of the Homezone scheme and to promote the commercial opportunities at Northshore, a dedicated website and brochure would be launched in the coming weeks.

Due to the ongoing success of Phase 1, a planning application to provide a further 76 properties through Phase 2 of the Homezone has been submitted. As part of this second phase, Muse (developers of the site) had secured Get Britain Building funding which would fund 25 units within the proposed development and this received approval on 6th August.

To bring forward further development on the Northshore site, Stockton Borough Council in partnership with Homes & Communities Agency and Muse were undertaking a study to assess the scale of demand for an Innovation Centre. It was envisaged that the building would extend to approximately 25-30,000 sq ft and be designed to provide flexible incubator and managed workspace accommodation for digital, creative and science based businesses.

To help realise this ambition, there was an opportunity to apply for significant investment through the European Regional Development Fund. To secure this intervention, the first stage of the process was the completion of an outline application, which had been submitted to the ERDF Programme Executive Group. Following the submission of the outline funding application, CLG would confirm whether the proposal was acceptable in principle and a more detailed business plan would be required.

Plans for an extension of Queens' Campus and the provision of additional student accommodation at Northshore had been positively received and the University had recently advised that it has internal approval to proceed with a 500 bed residential development and academic facilities on the current option land.

With regards to wider commercial interest, Muse were in advanced discussions with an occupier to create a 55,000 sq ft building on Northshore. Muse would continue to engage with potential occupiers to bring forward potential commercial schemes, which are vital to the viability of the Northshore development.

As part of the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone, Northshore had been successfully identified as an additional Enterprise Zone site for business rates relief to be funded locally.

RESOLVED that the success and positive progress made in developing out Northshore as well as the additional opportunities being advanced.

**CAB
64/12** **Billingham Customer Service Centre**

Members received a report that provided an update on developments with regard to the Billingham Customer Services Centre.

The PCT had revealed plans for significant investment in the refurbishment of the Billingham Integrated Health Care Centre on Queensway, including options for including some primary care service provision and accommodating some administrative functions. An application for funding for the scheme had been submitted to the Strategic Health Authority and the PCT was awaiting confirmation of this. A planning application for the scheme had been submitted and it was anticipated that the work be complete by March 2013.

In light of this decision, plans for the £2.7million Billingham Customer Service Centre could now begin apace. Discussions with the building users including the Library Service, Customer Services, Vela Group and Billingham Town Council had determined the accommodation requirements, upon which estimates for redevelopment were based. Further detailed discussions would be undertaken to finalise those requirements to inform detailed design work for the facility.

Plans for the Extra Care Scheme, which originally formed part of the larger Integrated Health & Social Care Scheme, were progressing and had been boosted with the news that Vela Group had been successful in securing £898,500 of Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) funding towards the multi-million pound scheme.

Work on the £2.3million Billingham Town Centre improvements was moving apace with the construction of new toilets underway and due for completion at the end of September. The building improvement works including new CCTV, glazing, decoration and repairs to brickwork and stairways, had been tendered with work due to begin in late September. Plans had also been completed for the public realm improvements and a planning application would be submitted for the elements of the scheme requiring planning consent.

Given the level of investment in new developments in Billingham alongside the already popular Billingham Forum, parking provision in Billingham, assessed under the Borough wide car parking strategy would now be brought forward for completion by December 2012.

The extensive improvements scheduled for John Whitehead Park under the Sport in the Park project were also recently given the boost of £130,000 grant funding from Sport England and £41,000 from SITA towards the £260,000 scheme to redevelop the tennis courts. This would create a new skate/BMX area, 4 improved tennis courts and a multi-use games area.

Members noted the next steps with regard to the Customer Services Centre , which would, hopefully, see it operational by Summer 2014.

RESOLVED that the progress made with the development of the Billingham Customer Service Centre be noted.

**CAB
65/12 Social Fund Localisation**

Members considered a report that outlined the Government's plans to localise elements of the Department of Work and Pension's administered Social Fund to local authorities from April 2013 and proposed an approach for the design and delivery of a local scheme for the borough.

Members were provided with indicative figures for funding for the programme and administrative costs. Members were informed of an options appraisal relating to the delivery of a pilot of the local social fund and noted that it was proposed to run a pilot scheme for the first 15 months to gather intelligence to inform and refine any local scheme for the Borough going forward.

Cabinet noted key principles that would underpin the design of the local provision which would form the basis of any procurement exercise to deliver the scheme. A fundamental principle would be that the scheme would be largely based upon need and would follow the same eligibility criteria as the existing scheme.

Members were provided with information relating to the pilot scheme's evaluation, consultation and communication.

Members agreed that evaluation of the pilot should take place after 3 months with a report to Cabinet. It was noted that local ward members would have a role in sign posting constituents to any third sector deliverer.

RESOLVED that

1. the social fund delivery be commissioned from the third sector on the basis of a 15 month pilot.
2. access to the scheme be based upon need and largely follow the same

eligibility criteria as the existing Social Fund scheme.

3. the design principles outlined in the report be approved.

4. the consultation and communication approach be noted.

**CAB
66/12** **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ("RIPA")**

Cabinet considered a report that provided feedback regarding the Office of Surveillance Commissioners ("OSC") inspection which took place on 2 April 2012; sought confirmation of the Council's Corporate Policy and Procedures Document; provided details of the surveillance activity carried out during 2011/12 and outlined the position regarding legislative changes to the RIPA regime.

It was explained that an inspection by the OSC took place on 2 April 2012.

As a result of the inspection, the Chief Surveillance Commissioner indicated that he was pleased to see that the Council continued to be a high performing Council in relation to its RIPA activities and that the Council's approach to using covert surveillance only when no other means of obtaining evidence is possible is commendable.

The Inspector suggested certain minor changes to the format of the central register (eg including the Authorising Officer's job title) and outlined a number of points regarding authorisations (eg emphasizing the requirements of necessity and proportionality).

Steps would be taken to make the changes suggested to the register and to implement the points made about authorisations.

Recommendations were also made in the review report in relation to the following matters:-

- Raising RIPA awareness within the Council
- Reducing the number of authorising officers
- Establishing a corporate RIPA training programme
- Amending the Corporate Policy and Procedure Document

The Chief Surveillance Commissioner had been informed that the Council accepted the recommendations and that the necessary action would be taken to ensure that the recommendations were each implemented. Members noted how recommendations with regard to raising awareness and training would be dealt with.

As a result of the recommendation made by the Inspector, the Council's Authorising Officers had already been reviewed and reduced to 5 from 19. The reduced number of Authorising Officers were considered to be sufficient to accommodate the likely surveillance activity which past experience suggests would take place. The remaining Authorising Officers were the Chief Executive; Corporate Director of Resources; Director of Law and Democracy; Head of Community Protection and Trading Standards and Licensing Manager.

The Council's policy and procedures document had been reviewed and revised in order to reflect the comments and recommendation made at the Inspection. The changes in the document had been highlighted for ease of reference. As examples, a new section had been included to highlight the responsibilities of the senior responsible officer (the Director of Law and Democracy) and the role which members had in relation to RIPA, as well as changing some stale dates and adding "aspects of professional and business life" to the definition of private information. Members were provided with access to the updated document.

Cabinet was provided with details of covert surveillance activity which had taken place during 2011/12.

It was explained that the Home Office code of practice on Covert Surveillance and Property Interference recommended that members consider quarterly reports on their authority's use of RIPA. Currently Cabinet received six monthly Finance and Performance information, which included details of RIPA surveillance and communications data authorisations/applications. It was proposed that from 2012/13 onwards, the six monthly reports were supplemented by two further quarterly reports, consisting of RIPA activity details (which would be anonymised information) which would be circulated to all members by email.

Members noted legislative changes to RIPA through the Protection of Freedoms Act. In particular there would be a surveillance camera code of practice which local authorities would have to have regard to.

The Council's policy and procedures would need to be reviewed and revised to reflect these new provisions and arrangements. When this had been done, a further report would be submitted to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that

1. the outcome of the OSC inspection which took place on 2 April 2012 and the action proposed to implement its recommendations be noted.
2. the changes to the Council's Authorising Officers be affirmed and the role of the Director of Law and Democracy as the senior responsible officer for RIPA be confirmed.
3. the RIPA Corporate Policy and Procedures Document be confirmed, as revised, following the OSC inspection;
4. the details relating to RIPA activity carried out during 2011/12 and the proposal to circulate similar details to Members during 2012/13 on a quarterly basis, including the two six monthly Finance and Performance reports to Cabinet be noted.
5. the current position regarding the legislative changes to RIPA detailed in the report and the intention to submit a further report to Cabinet in that respect be noted.

Consideration was given to a report on the launch by the Parliamentary Political and Constitutional Reform Committee and the Local Government Association, of a public discussion, looking into the merits of constitutional reform to make the role of Whitehall and Councils clearer to local residents. The proposals suggested providing decentralisation of power from Whitehall to Local Councils and codifying this arrangement in statute.

The recently enacted Localism Act gives effect to the government's ambitions to decentralise power away from Whitehall down to local councils, communities and individuals, to allow them to act on local priorities. The Act covered a range of key policy areas including the provision for a General Power of Competence.

This was something that the LGA had long campaigned for on behalf of Local Government. This act along with initiatives such as Community Budgets, City Deals and the devolution of power to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales etc signals some cross party intent to give councils the freedom to be creative and entrepreneurial, acting on behalf of their communities and in their own financial interest.

Notwithstanding these shifts, it remained a fact that Local Government in this country had no standing or protection embedded in a codified constitution or document. Legally the system of local government in England could be abolished completely at any time by government, putting through a Local Government Abolition Bill. This highlighted a constitutional weakness of local government within the system of governance.

The Political and Constitutional Reform Committee along with the Local Government Association had recently been inquiring into the relationship between local and central government. This had been widely supported and evidence showed that concerns had been raised that centralisation had eroded local government autonomy, leaving people with less say over how their communities were run. Most western democracies enshrine and entrench the rights of local government in their constitutions but the UK's unwritten constitution provided no such protection for councils and councillors.

To support the debate and form a basis for consultation, the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee had asked an academic witness to draft up an illustrative draft code, governing the relationship between Central and Local Government in England. This draft code was based upon 9 principles, set out by the Committee. Central and Local Government could benefit from a code that clearly set out rights and responsibilities and codifies this in statute. This code was a starting point for discussion and to further explore a new vision for the future. A summary of the draft code was detailed within the report.

Through this code Parliament recognised free and independent local councils in England, accountable to local citizens. These included unitary, district, county, metropolitan district and London borough councils who would enjoy independence in both powers and finance and be entitled to do all that was

required at a local level, within the law, to secure and improve the wellbeing of their citizens and communities. Local councils would have co-equal, not subordinate, status to central government and their rights and duties would enjoy equal protection in law.

The draft code contained ten articles each detailing different aspects, agreements and provided an understanding of the code. A summary of each article was provided within the report.

The key to successfully implementing codification of inter governmental relationships was Central Governments willingness to permanently devolve political and governmental power to councils. Given this intention, any negative implications of codifications should be overcome through the creation of safeguards and by negotiation and compromise. The forging of new relationships between central and local government must go hand in hand with forging new relationships between citizens, councils and councillors. The principal of codification and the draft code, provide the basis for forging these new sets of relationships and a framework within which they could be explored.

The opportunity to move this discussion forward had the support of the Local Government Association, politicians nationally and was supported by the Council of Europe charter on Local Self-Governance, which was first agreed in 1985 and signed up to unconditionally by the UK government .

The work of the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee and the Local Government Association provided a useful and timely opportunity to thoroughly examine the relationship between central and local government. It was recommended that the authority take up the opportunity that the paper provided to influence locally, regionally and nationally the constitutional and governance arrangements going forward.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the report and content be noted.
2. the proposals to actively engage in the discussions going forward be supported.

**CAB
68/12**

Youth Participation

Consideration was given to a report on the arrangements for the election of the Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP) and establishment of a more representative and democratically appointed Youth Assembly.

Through the PIC network a Shadow Youth Board (SYB) was established as a strategic initiative to ensure young people's views were represented within the Children's Trust Board. The young people involved were volunteers and not democratically elected. To date the remit of the SYB had been limited and not linked to the Council's decision making structures and scrutiny processes.

As part of the Youth Services EIT review, the Children and Young People Select Committee asked that the future involvement of young people on the Children

and Young People Select Committee be formalised through the introduction of appropriate engagement mechanisms.

For some time there had been a recognized need to establish a new structure establishing a more representative and democratically elected Youth Assembly. The new structure would:-

- Work with young people directly in youth led action projects
- Actively encourage youth involvement and community change
- Involve young people in innovative and accessible ways, take part in consultations to guide the work we do as a Council
- Provide information to young people about our projects, the work of the Council and other youth services

Training and support would be provided in order to enable the young people involved to take part in new opportunities.

It was proposed that the new model:-

- would replace the current Shadow Youth Board with a more representative “Youth Assembly” made up of representatives from a range of existing youth forums (e.g. school councils, BME, young carers, sixth forms, special needs reps and the UK Member of the youth parliament);
- that the MYP should be a representative on the youth assembly so that young people’s voices in the Borough were heard on a local, regional and national level;
- local youth elections for YMP and the Youth Assembly were held with support from Democratic Services, electoral services;

IYSS to work closely with Democratic Services to include a broader referral process for future MYPs, closer links with the schools and develop an action plan to work towards a 2013 election option. This would also raise awareness in schools, colleges/ youth forums etc.

The British Youth Council had published a guide for staff, Councillors and young people involved in youth voice activities within the local authority. The guide set out a toolkit for local authorities to test the strength of their youth voice arrangements underpinned by principles which should inform the involvement of young people in decision making. Members were provided with details of the principles.

The self-assessment toolkit posed a series of questions with some indicators of best practice and was attached to the report.

It was proposed that the youth assembly be established in line with guiding principles set out above and the indicators of best practice (with the exception that budgets and communications could be coordinated by the Council).

Membership would be drawn from 11 – 19 year olds (up to 25 year olds for young people with special needs). Representation would be drawn in the first instance from:-

- School Councils (secondary)
- Sixth Forms and Colleges
- Universal Youth Clubs
- BME (via Cornerhouse)
- Young Carers (via Eastern Ravens)
- LDD Representatives plus appropriate Advocacy Support (possibly via Special Schools but not mutually exclusive to one organisation)
- LAC/ Care Leavers (via CiC Council)
- Special Interest Groups
- Member of the UK Youth Parliament

It was proposed that the Area Youth Boards were not retained under the new model and that their role was replaced by the new Youth Assembly; arguably the Youth Assembly would be more representative and could still have the capacity to facilitate area based youth work. Communications with Elected Members on the proposed new ways of working would be critical.

Membership of the youth assembly would need to be kept under review with other groups/ bodies added to the membership as appropriate.

It would be for each school and group to agree their own internal mechanisms for nominations to the youth assembly and it was suggested that appropriate democratic processes were in place to achieve this.

It was proposed that Terms of Office would be two years in line with the term of office of the UK Youth Parliament member.

Once established it would be essential that the youth assembly had a wider voice in community matters and the ability to feed into/ support the Council's decision making structures.

Democratic Services would manage the development of the work programme and meetings, which would also enable stronger links to be established between the Youth Assembly and Council decision making structures, in addition to providing other support (e.g. induction and ongoing development). IYSS would continue to provide wider engagement and support to the young people involved.

Cabinet was asked to consider the new model which would then be subject to consultation with young people and stakeholders prior to implementation at the start of the next municipal year to tie in with the elections for the MYP.

The current MYP was appointed from young people in the Borough who had expressed an interest in being involved with the UK Youth Parliament. It was proposed that, in future, local youth elections for the MYP were organized by Democratic Services, Electoral Services.

Electoral Services would be developing detailed arrangements, in conjunction with IYSS and key partners, for elections to take place possibly in February 2013. These would follow a similar approach to any other elections.

Following Cabinet consideration, the proposed model and approach would be

subject to consultation with young people and stakeholders.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the new model, which would be implemented at the start of the next municipal year, to tie in with the elections for the MYP, be noted.
2. consultation take place with young people and stakeholders including the existing Shadow Youth Board.

**CAB
69/12** **Update on progress against Stockton's Armed Forces Community Covenant (including actions from the Regional Scrutiny Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community)**

Consideration was given to a report that detailed progress on the implementation of Stockton's Armed Forces Community Covenant.

In March 2012 Stockton Council and partners signed the Stockton Armed Forces Community Covenant. The Covenant was intended to encourage support for the Armed Forces working and residing in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of the community.

The Covenant commits the Council and Renaissance partners to:-

- support employees who volunteer for reserve duties;
- ensure that the voice of serving and ex-service personnel is heard through the Council's engagement mechanisms;
- report annually to Council on the impact of the Covenant;
- identify key officer and Member champions, and implement the other recommendations of the Regional Scrutiny Review of the Health Needs of the Ex-Service Community.

The Armed Forces had in return committed to deliver annual updates to both Members and updates on operational experiences and policy changes, and to be involved in community activities and events.

The final report of the Regional Health Scrutiny Committee following its review of the health needs of ex-service personnel was considered by Cabinet in February 2011. The review was an innovative and wide ranging piece of work covering physical, mental and socio-economic needs. The project received contributions from all 12 of the region's local authorities, the Ministry of Health, Department of Health, NHS bodies, and ex-service charities and personnel themselves, amongst others.

The review's 47 recommendations sought to ensure that ex-service personnel and their families were not disadvantaged due to their service in the Armed Forces.

Many of the recommendations were for external organisations (eg. NHS), or for local authorities but could be undertaken on a regional basis. For example,

ANEC had agreed to take forward work in relation to improving the quality of the data flow between the armed forces and local authorities. In relation to the recommendations applicable to Stockton Council, in line with the Cabinet decision an action plan was agreed with officers and relevant Cabinet Members.

Overall the proposals sought to utilise existing generic support where possible, whilst recognising that through better identification of clients within services, existing services would be better able to meet their needs, and potentially refer clients to other services if appropriate. The Policy Officers' Group was tasked with co-ordinating the implementation of the local action plan. It was agreed to monitor this on a six-monthly basis.

The definition of someone who was ex-Service, or a veteran, was taken to mean those who had served in the UK Armed Forces, whether regular or reserve forces, at any time and irrespective of length of service, and also included those who served in the Merchant Navy in support of legally defined military operations (MoD).

These actions were subsequently incorporated into Stockton's Community Covenant which recognised the contribution made by the Armed Forces as a whole. The report therefore provided an overview of all measures taken to date to support the armed forces community in Stockton-on-Tees. The annual report to Council on the impact of the Covenant was scheduled for March 2013, and the report supported that process.

A report summarising progress to date was attached to the report. This also highlighted were actions originated from the regional review, as the Regional Health Scrutiny Committee continued to monitor them on a region-wide basis, and the report formed the basis of Stockton's submission to the next meeting.

There had been progress on a number of issues, and to further embed good practice it had been agreed to hold a seminar style event in order to bring together relevant service areas and key stakeholders. One of the intended outcomes for this was a better awareness of the range of information that was being collected, and how this could be brought together to improve services.

It was recognised that responsibility for the covenant and actions from the review cut across a number of portfolios. It was agreed that for consistency and clarity one member should be identified as lead member/champion for this matter.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the progress report be noted.
2. the ongoing work to implement the actions be supported.
3. Councillor Beall be identified as lead member/champion for matters relating to the Armed Forces Community Covenant and Regional Scrutiny Review actions.

