

## **Cabinet**

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 10th January, 2013.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook (Chair); Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr David Harrington, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson and Cllr Michael Smith.

**Officers:** N. Schneider (CEO); J. Danks, B. Brown, G. Cummings, L. King (R); R. McGuckin, R. Poundford, J. Nixon, R. Kench (DNS); J. Humphreys, L. Brown (CESC), P. Kelly (PH); M. Waggott, J. Grant P. Bell (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Mark Chatburn, Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Andrew Sherris and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

**Apologies:** Cllr David Rose.

### **CAB 108/12**     **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Cook declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6 - LA Representation on School Governing Bodies, under paragraph 11 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, as he was a Governor at Norton Primary School.

Councillors Mrs McCoy and Smith declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 16 - Delegation of NNDR1 Return/Financial Implications to Parish Councils of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, under paragraph 11 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, as they were Members of Billingham Town Council.

Councillors Dixon and Harrington declared a personal interest in respect of Delegation of NNDR1 Return/Financial Implications to Parish Councils of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, under paragraph 11 of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, as they had members of their family that were Members of Ingleby Barwick Town Council.

Councillor Javed declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 - EIT Review of Learning Disability Services as he was employed by Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust. Cllr Javed had been granted a dispensation in this regard.

### **CAB 109/12**     **Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **CAB 110/12**     **Borough Wide Car Parking Review Update**

Consideration was given to a report on the Borough Wide Car Parking Strategy Review.

Cabinet approved the borough-wide car parking strategy in December 2011 and an update was provided on progress in February 2012 following the call in by Executive Scrutiny of the original decision. This strategy arose from the report to Cabinet from the Environment Select Committee that identified that it was inequitable not to charge in three town centres when charges were applied in

Stockton Town Centre. Cabinet agreed the principle of charging for car parking specifically in Yarm, but stated that it should be introduced as part of a borough wide review of parking charges that would include charging blue badge holders in Council owned off street car parks.

The report updated Cabinet on the work that had been carried out on the strategy in respect of Billingham, Norton, Thornaby, Yarm, Stockton Town Centre and the approach to charging blue badge holders for parking. There had been a great deal of activity particularly in Billingham, Stockton and Yarm town centres around the car parking agenda and a clear plan had been developed to ensure that the original Cabinet decision was under implementation. In summary, Billingham had seen proposals brought forward for extra care provision adjacent to the town centre which would impact on provision of car parking and the report set out the options to offset this impact. In Stockton construction work at the south end of the High Street was well underway and a range of incentives had been identified to help support visitor numbers during disruption. In Yarm a legal dispute had delayed original intentions for the introduction of pay and display however, this was concluded and a clear plan of implementation was set out in the report which included engagement with affected residents groups and the Chamber of Trade for Yarm. This engagement had provided some very useful feedback in designing the details of the proposals going forward.

The Borough wide car parking strategy considered the issues that were evident in each of the town centres, the current parking provision and actions to be taken where appropriate to improve the situation. Taking each of these town centres in turn a review of progress was presented within the report.

With regard to Yarm the report detailed the recommendations that were approved by Cabinet 2011.

A clear plan for changes to car parking arrangements in Yarm had been developed since December 2011. This had included clear engagement with residents groups and the Chamber of Trade to understand how the changes would impact on them and how their needs could be taken into consideration. A plan of the existing car parking arrangements in Yarm was attached to the report.

In March 2012 Yarm Town Council applied for a Judicial Review of the decision to introduce parking charges in Yarm.

The Judicial Review concluded in Leeds High Court over two days on 23rd August and 28th September 2012, with judgement being handed down on 10th October 2012. The application of judicial review by Yarm Town Council was dismissed which enabled the original Cabinet decision to introduce pay and display to proceed.

During the period of legal challenge engagement with the Town Council continued and at a meeting with the Town Council members on 28th June 2012 they agreed to submit an alternative proposal for car parking in Yarm and this would be available by the end of September 2012. This was received, eventually after a final request, on 30th October 2012 and was attached to the report.

The Town Council proposal had been evaluated against a series of criteria and objectives consistent with both the borough wide strategy and the findings of the market research, the results were detailed within the report.

There were areas where the Town Council scheme differed significantly in approach but it was refreshing to see that the principle of charging had been accepted at least for long stay car parks.

Dialogue with the Chamber of Trade for Yarm continued in November 2012 and their views were captured with regard to possible long stay provision on sites that the Council did not control and the period of free parking at the start of a visit. It was quite clear that the Chamber of Trade would like to see an increase from the proposed 10 minute free period beyond 20 minutes free. This had been given considerable thought but a period of up to 30 minutes would become difficult to manage and would require a labour intensive enforcement regime similar to that currently in use with the disc zone. However, up to or close to a 20 minute window could possibly be managed more effectively and it was proposed as a result of dialogue with the Chamber of Trade that up to the first 20 minutes could be free. The tariff beyond the free period of 20 minutes remained subject to further detailed consultation through the statutory process of a new Traffic Regulation Order, however, a charge of £1 for the first two hours and then £1 per hour thereafter was a reasonable measure at this stage and this charge was similar to the tariff of Stockton off-street car parks. The likely time for charges to apply would be between 9.00am and 5.00pm which would mean that the successful evening economy in Yarm would benefit from free parking outside of these hours. It was noted that a range of incentives were in place for parking arrangements in Stockton town centre and any charging regime in Yarm would also benefit from the same flexibilities and incentives used in Stockton town centre.

It was proposed to move forward with the design of the charging arrangements in Yarm, taking into consideration the input from residents and business meetings before embarking on the statutory consultation process.

Consultation on the proposal would help shape the detail for the residents permit scheme, the charges applicable, hours of operation etc. At this stage these details had not been formulated.

There would be a need to bring forward a range of parking restrictions to address existing indiscriminate parking and to manage the inevitable displacement that would occur as a result of introducing charging.

Any objections to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order would be considered by the Appeals and Complaints Committee before the Order is confirmed. The process for bringing a Traffic Regulation Order in place is likely to take around six months.

As a result of discussions with residents and the Chamber of Trade and the Town Council's alternative proposal officers were continuing to pursue the acquisition of new sites for long stay car parking provision. Several of these sites remained in private ownership and discussions with the owners over lease or purchase arrangements had stalled for some time. As the implications for not

providing additional long stay car parking remained of concern Members were advised that the Council may need to use its powers of compulsory purchase under the Highways Act 1980 to help secure this provision from the private sector.

Feedback from the community had also included complaints about a number of Yarm School pupils who park vehicles on the High Street and a commitment had been given to work with the school to secure ways to help reduce the impact of this potential problem on the High Street.

Many Councils were charging blue badge holders for parking in off street car parks. The principle was agreed at Cabinet in December 2011, since then consultation with disability groups had taken place. One concession that was to be introduced was the extra time for no extra cost to allow disabled drivers/passengers to do what they need to in the town centres and to facilitate the extra time it could take to get in and out of their vehicles.

5 emailed responses to the pay and display proposals in Yarm were circulated to Members and the Head of Technical Services detailed the responses. The Head of Technical Services then responded to the issues that had been raised within the emails.

Members then discussed the report and agreed that those elements of the alternative car parking proposal submitted by Yarm Town Council that compliment the delivery of the objectives be supported and included where appropriate in the car parking strategy.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress in respect of delivery of the borough wide car parking strategy be noted.
2. The alternative car parking proposal submitted by Yarm Town Council be noted, and those elements that compliment the delivery of the objectives be supported and included where appropriate in the car parking strategy.
3. The Head of Technical Service in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services be authorised to pursue the acquisition of suitable land to provide a long stay car park for Yarm, if necessary by using a Compulsory Purchase Order.
4. Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation the Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport be endorsed to proceed through the statutory process for the implementation of the agreed changes to the parking arrangements in Yarm.

**CAB 111/12 Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Review of Learning Disability Services**

Consideration was given to a report on the EIT Review of Learning Disability Services.

The report of the Adult Services and Health Select Committee outlined the results of an in-depth review of learning disability services provided by Stockton Council. This had included an in-depth examination of the commissioning, care planning, and provision of adult social care services for people with learning disabilities.

The Council had a statutory obligation to meet identified need for those clients assessed as being eligible for services in line with the Council's eligibility criteria for adult social care. Services provided must meet identified need, however the Council must also ensure that they were providing value for money. The Committee had found that there was scope to both improve the services that the Council provided or commissioned, at the same time as achieving better value for money.

The Committee's proposals were approved in principle by Cabinet on 17th May 2012 and had been subject to 12-weeks of public consultation. The results of the consultation were summarised in the Committee's report and the feedback was broadly supportive of the proposals. The Committee had finalised its proposals and made recommendations for change. There would be no changes to individual client circumstances without appropriate re-assessment and care planning.

Members noted that the recommendations had been informed by the Equality Impact Assessment, and this was attached to the report.

Members thanked the Adult Services and Health Select Committee and the Officers that had been involved in the review.

Carers, parents of the service users and service users were in attendance at the meeting and were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment.

RESOLVED that:-

1. a new Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy be developed, and this should include the proposals outlined in recommendations 2-18;
2. there should be only one building based day service in the Borough, that this should focus on providing services for people with complex needs, and should be based at the Allensway building. Service users with complex needs currently receiving services at other locations in and out of the Borough (including Rievaulx Resource Centre) should be supported to move to Allensway;
3. service users who do not have complex needs should be supported to access services in community settings for example the existing models of Central Stockton Day Services, and Brighter Futures, and new provision in Billingham. This will include those currently accessing services in Allensway and Rievaulx;
4. the subsidy for meals in day services, where currently provided, should be discontinued, and that alternative cafe style/packed lunch options be further developed;

5. Brighter Futures be reviewed in order to ensure that service users move on from the service into other services where appropriate, and the aim of this service is to enable young adults (up to 25 years old) to access community based services;
6. out of Borough day care provision should not be commissioned unless the Council is satisfied that assessed needs cannot be met in the Borough;
7. service users who live in Borough but currently attend out of Borough day services, should be encouraged and supported to receive services in-Borough, subject to assessed needs being met, and commissioners should determine any requirement for additional provision in-Borough;
8. the Council should encourage the development of community business opportunities for service users;
9. subject to a successful outcome of the pilot, the Community Bridge Building scheme be rolled out on a permanent basis, in order to support individuals to achieve greater independence and integration into local communities, and that consideration be given to funding a transitions Bridge Building worker;
10. as a general principle the Council should enable more people with learning disabilities to have access to more independent living opportunities, and reduce the use of residential care. Residential care should be recommended when independent living would not meet assessed need or does not provide value for money;
11. for those whose assessed needs would still be best met through residential care, the Council should aim to increase the range of in-Borough placements to reduce the use of out of Borough placements;
12. where appropriate and following review, service users in out of Borough residential care should be encouraged and supported to use in-Borough residential care;
13. the Council should seek to increase the choice and range of affordable homes for independent living with appropriate care and support;
14. the Council should encourage and support those in residential care who are ready to move into independent living;
15. capacity in respite care at Lanark Close be increased whilst still making efficiency savings, increasing the number of beds from 6 to 9;
16. a menu of options for short break services be developed. These should be either commissioned by the Council or be accessible via personal budgets;
17. the Council works closely with the NHS including the Clinical Commissioning Group, to explore the provision of a joint respite facility for service users with more complex needs;

18. the Council should explore the commissioning of new autism provision in the Borough;

19. the improvements to care management and commissioning as outlined in the report, and included in the Working Practices Handbook, be implemented to ensure a successful implementation of the Committee's recommendations and the proposed commissioning strategy.

**CAB 112/12 LA nominations for Cabinet 10 January 2013**

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

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

St. Paul's RC Primary School - Mr Paul Crawshaw  
Norton Primary School - Mrs H Morrissey  
Yarm Primary School - Cllr Mark Chatburn

**CAB 113/12 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 114/12 A Safe Place for Children**

Members received a report that provided information that Stockton Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (SLSCB) had drawn up guidance, A Safer Place for Children, for member agencies to promote the safety of children in public settings such as libraries and neighbourhood centres.

Members were provided with the following information:-

Public settings such as libraries, neighbourhood centres and sports centres could be dynamic and exciting places for children, providing relevant and accessible services. To enable these services to flourish it was essential that they are a safe place for children who use them. Children should feel safe and secure and know that they would receive suitable help if required.

A Safer Place for Children had been produced by SLSCB to support organisations responsible for such settings to create an appropriately safe environment. The guidance had been written specifically for managers of public settings who require a framework to assist them in the development of policies and procedures to promote the safety of children.

A policy promoting the safety of children is one of the foundations of a well managed service. Rather than reacting to particular difficulties or threats, organisations should seek to proactively create an environment in which children feel comfortable and safe where their self confidence can grow.

It was important that all agencies working with children were seen to create safe public settings within the community which take the issue of children's safety seriously.

Such settings should also make information available to parents to ensure the safety of their children when using the facilities. This should include details of who to contact if they have concerns on a number of issues such as:-

- \* Child abuse and neglect
- \* Bullying
- \* Forced marriage
- \* Sexual exploitation
- \* E-safety

RESOLVED that:-

1. A Safer Place for Children guidance be adopted.
2. Delegate responsibility for approving amended policies covering the various public settings run by or on behalf of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to the relevant Corporate Director and Lead Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Corporate Director, Children Education and Social Care.

**CAB**      **Economic Climate Update Report**  
**115/12**

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.

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

**CAB**     **City Deal**  
**116/12**

Members considered a report relating to the Local Enterprise Partnership's City Deal submission.

It was explained that, in October, the Government formally invited Tees Valley to apply for a second wave 'City Deal' and since then work had been on-going producing drafts for discussion with partners, including the local authorities, Business Representative Organisations and our lead contact from the Government's Cabinet Office.

The key points in the bid as it stands are:

- The fundamental Challenge for the Tees Valley is not enough jobs particularly private sector ones, over reliance on public sector leading to high levels of unemployment
- Key sectors are important to UK economy but involve high use/emission of CO2
- Significant strengths in exporting but significant untapped potential
- Opportunity lies in scale and make up of industrial activity
- Opportunity to accelerate pace of change deploying green technology
- Opportunity to grow and make it much more competitive by integrating activities and supply chains
- Vision involves a home to globally significant petro-chemical, bio-chemical and new renewable energy sectors that drives forward greater diversification and opportunity in other sectors such as advanced manufacturing, sub-sea, digital enablement
- The area's offer involves use of the Investment Fund as a catalyst for private sector investment
- Local companies will lead the integration to enhance competitiveness
- The Government is being asked for a single capital pot allocation, innovative funding mechanisms and a policy approach that is cross-departmental, cohesive and comprehensive
- In addition investment in commercialising research, ensuring that skill needs are met and infrastructure provision keeps pace with the growth are also being sought

The Expression of Interest (EOI) had to be submitted by 15th January and the indications were that perhaps as few as 12 out of the 20 cities/areas invited to bid would be successful. Clearly the aim was to get through this competitive stage and then enter into much more detailed negotiations (8/9 months had been mentioned) with the Government to firm up the deal.

Given the nature of the exercise and the complex sources of input into the EOI,

the Council was asked to support the bid and agree that the final form of the submission will be settled by TVU via the Chairman and Managing Director.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the final approval of the bid by the Council be delegated to the Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
2. the Council supports the bid and agrees to the final form of the submission being settled by TVU via its Chairman and Managing Director.

**CAB**     **Billingham Town Centre**  
**117/12**

Consideration was given to a report on the progress made on the proposals for the regeneration of Billingham Town Centre. The report focused upon refurbishment works and new paving in the town centre along with details of proposals for further investment in health facilities, extra care housing and customer service and library facilities.

A report was presented to Cabinet in July 2012 where detail of progress in bringing forward redevelopment proposals from the 2009 Billingham Town Centre Masterplan was reported. At that stage, a revised development agreement between the Council and owners of Billingham Town Centre, Stockland UK had recently been signed enabling meaningful redevelopment of the town centre to take place, building upon recent investment by Stockland and the £18.5million refurbishment of the Forum.

Since July 2012, officers had been working alongside Stockland to agree the detail of the £2.35million redevelopment works and on the detailed design of a high quality paving and public realm scheme throughout the town centre.

Redevelopment proposals and details of the paving and public realm were presented to the public for comment at a display in the Forum from 23rd July to 3rd August. The display was well attended and comments from the public were in the main positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to view proposals and the opportunity to discuss issues with officers.

One of the key issues raised by the public was the need for improved public toilets in the town centre. New public toilets in West Precinct opened on October 9th. This represented the first meaningful phase of the planned redevelopment works in the centre.

The main redevelopment works, including; new windows to upper floors, new CCTV system, new stairways, handrail repairs, repainting, brickwork repairs and cleaning began on 1st October with a target completion date of 21st December 2012.

The removal of two, permanently closed walkways between the centre and Kingsway car park was also planned as part of redevelopment proposals, this work would take place alongside the main paving and public realm contract.

Paving and public realm works would begin in January 2013. The agreed scheme would see the existing paving removed from the town centre, unsightly sunken areas filled in and replaced with new high quality paving, seating, feature lighting and tree planting throughout the centre along with a reinforced section of town square to accommodate the regular market and a canopy over the existing bandstand to enable greater use for events.

The first phase of paving work involved the removal of asbestos from below ground ducting to enable the delivery of the new paving and public realm scheme to be delivered as efficiently as possible immediately after the asbestos removal had been complete.

It was anticipated that works to remove asbestos and deliver the new paving scheme would take approximately 12 months with a target completion date set for Christmas 2013.

With regard to further investment the delivery of £2.35million redevelopment works in the town centre and the high quality paving and public realm scheme would be complemented by a range of other significant, existing and new investments and developments in and around the town centre.

Detailed design of the £2.7million Customer Service Centre was progressing. The proposed scheme would see a high quality customer service centre, similar in design and function to the successful facilities already in operation in Stockton and Thornaby town centres in the heart of Billingham town centre. Demolition of existing buildings was planned for spring 2013 with a further update on design and programme to be brought to Cabinet at that time.

Cabinet were updated in November 2012 on proposals for the provision of a £6million Extra Care Housing facility to be delivered by north east housing group Vela. The proposed development was subject to a decision by Planning Committee on 16th January 2013. If approved, work would begin on site in March 2013.

Work was underway on the refurbishment of the existing Queensway Health Centre. Redevelopment works would provide modern medical facilities and enable a greater access to primary care services for residents of Billingham. Work on the refurbishment of the health centre would be complete in March 2013.

A further £260,000 would be invested in John Whitehead Park to deliver a new skate/BMX area, 4 improved tennis courts and a multi-use games area. Work would begin early in 2013 and would be complete by December 2013. The new leisure facilities in John Whitehead Park complement the high quality, state of the art sport and leisure facilities available as part of the £18.5million refurbishment of Billingham Forum, officially opened by the Countess of Wessex in November 2012.

This highlighted the circa £30million already invested or committed for spend in Billingham in the next 12 months. This investment would aid ongoing efforts by Stockland to secure a supermarket operator and new retailers in the town centre.

Discussions between Stockland and Wetherspoons on proposals to merge units in West Precinct to accommodate a large public house were progressing with planning permission granted in March 2012. The town centre remained over 90% let with a large Poundland store opened in early 2012 along with ongoing retailer interest.

RESOLVED that progress made to date on regeneration proposals and the proposals for further investment across Billingham Town Centre be noted.

**CAB**     **Stockton Town Centre**  
**118/12**

Consideration was given to a report on progress of projects delivering the regeneration vision for Stockton Town Centre. The report contained details of infrastructure works to the High Street, initiatives to support retail and business growth, progress on enhancements to Stockton's market offer, economic development projects; and business support along with details of projects and interventions which had reached a point in their development where further financial approvals were required to support the next phase of delivery.

Cabinet were presented with two reports (December 2011 and June 2012,) which set out progress made on initial designs for the new High Street layout, public and stakeholder consultation along with subsequent alterations to design and a broad range of projects, aimed at improving the economic performance of the town centre, supporting new and existing business growth, improvements to the market offer and support for a growing programme of events.

The MTFP report to Cabinet in February 2012 approved the initial allocation of resources to support the delivery of identified works and projects across the first phases of works in the town centre.

With regard to the further phase of investment an opportunity existed to bring forward a number of planned projects and interventions that would support existing and new business growth, develop the evening and leisure economy and address issues with vacant properties.

Project proposals would give support to aspirations for introducing a higher level of housing into the town centre, utilising vacant space across the High Street. Dedicated space for creative business linked to existing business and leisure facilities would be provided along with additional start up and follow on space for new businesses in the town centre.

Proposals would also see greater flexibility to work with existing landlords and property owners to address issues with properties across the High Street, improving their appearance and bringing vacant space back into use.

The projects identified were all linked to existing activities and would act as a further stage in the regeneration of the town centre. These projects required an additional level of resource to that allocated and requested and would therefore need to be considered in more detail alongside other budget pressures at a later date as part of the council's medium-term financial planning approach.

With regard to the Globe theatre, details were given of where the works had reached. It was also reported that there would be an opportunity to seek funds from Heritage Lottery to bring the building back to a standard commensurate with its significance to the town and wider population.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress made on projects and activities across the High Street and town centre funded within the final phase of financial approvals as set out in paragraphs 3-33 be noted.
2. The request for funding to support the next phase of £4,690,000 to progress projects set out in paragraphs 34-45 be noted and final approvals as part of the MTFP process be agreed.

**CAB**     **Flood Investigation Report**  
**119/12**

Members considered a report relating to the Local Enterprise Partnership's City Deal submission.

It was explained that, in October, the Government formally invited Tees Valley to apply for a second wave 'City Deal' and since then work had been on-going producing drafts for discussion with partners, including the local authorities, Business Representative Organisations and our lead contact from the Government's Cabinet Office.

The key points in the bid as it stands are:

- The fundamental Challenge for the Tees Valley is not enough jobs particularly private sector ones, over reliance on public sector leading to high levels of unemployment
- Key sectors are important to UK economy but involve high use/emission of CO2
- Significant strengths in exporting but significant untapped potential
- Opportunity lies in scale and make up of industrial activity
- Opportunity to accelerate pace of change deploying green technology
- Opportunity to grow and make it much more competitive by integrating activities and supply chains
- Vision involves a home to globally significant petro-chemical, bio-chemical and new renewable energy sectors that drives forward greater diversification and opportunity in other sectors such as advanced manufacturing, sub-sea, digital enablement
- The area's offer involves use of the Investment Fund as a catalyst for private sector investment
- Local companies will lead the integration to enhance competitiveness
- The Government is being asked for a single capital pot allocation, innovative funding mechanisms and a policy approach that is cross-departmental, cohesive and comprehensive
- In addition investment in commercialising research, ensuring that skill needs are met and infrastructure provision keeps pace with the growth are also being sought

The Expression of Interest (EOI) had to be submitted by 15th January and the indications were that perhaps as few as 12 out of the 20 cities/areas invited to bid would be successful. Clearly the aim was to get through this competitive stage and then enter into much more detailed negotiations (8/9 months had been mentioned) with the Government to firm up the deal.

Given the nature of the exercise and the complex sources of input into the EOI, the Council was asked to support the bid and agree that the final form of the submission will be settled by TVU via the Chairman and Managing Director.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the final approval of the bid by the Council be delegated to the Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
2. the Council supports the bid and agrees to the final form of the submission being settled by TVU via its Chairman and Managing Director.

**CAB**  
**120/12**     **Annual Audit Letter 2012**

Members considered a report relating to the Annual Audit Letter.

Members were reminded that, in recent years, the Audit Commission had been responsible for arranging the audit of the accounts of the Council (either by private firms or through their own auditors) and for assessing the Council's arrangements for securing value for money. The Government had now changed the role of the Commission. Under the new arrangements the Commission had retained a commissioning role while its audit practice had been outsourced to a number of commercial firms. With effect from 1st September 2012 the Council's external audit would be provided by Mazars LLP.

A formal stage in the annual audit process was the production of the "Annual Audit Letter". The Annual Audit Letter for 2011/12 had been received and was provided to members. The District Auditor was in attendance to present the letter and answer any questions. Due to the change of auditor the Annual Audit Letter was much briefer than in previous years therefore the Annual Governance Report was also provided to give greater detail.

The Annual Audit Letter summarised the auditor's findings from the 2011/12 audit. In line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council.

The Audit Commission had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2011/12 and no material amendments were required.

The Commission had issued an unqualified value for money conclusion stating that it was satisfied that "in all significant respects, Stockton on Tees Borough Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2012".

It considered that “the Council continued to maintain arrangements to secure financial resilience through ongoing medium term financial plan updates and detailed consideration of changes in funding and service provision” and that “the three-year efficiency, improvement and transformation review programme had come to an end and predicted savings were being achieved”.

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

**CAB 121/12 Collections Development Policy(Preston Hall Museum Accreditation)**

Consideration was given to a report on the Collections Development Policy for Preston Hall Museum’s re-accreditation submission in January 2013. The Museum last underwent Accreditation in 2009 with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council prior to the refurbishment project. Responsibility for the newly revised scheme had changed and an invitation to re-accredit was issued in September 2012 and a submission must be made to the Arts Council by January 29th 2013 in order to maintain this important National standard.

The Museum Registration Scheme was established in 1988. Since then it had supported museums across the UK to focus on standards and identify areas for development. In 2004, the scheme was renamed Accreditation to better reflect its purpose.

The Accreditation Scheme set nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. There were just under 1,800 museums participating in the scheme, demonstrating their commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment and benefit of users. Accreditation was administered by Arts Council England in partnership with CYMAL (Museum, Archives, Libraries Wales), Museums and Galleries Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museum Council.

Preston Hall was last accredited in 2004 and had been invited to resubmit under the revised scheme in early 2013.

The Collections Development Policy combined the previous Acquisition and Disposal Policy and the Collections Rationalisation “Too Much Stuff” Policy.

The report detailed the accreditation process and a copy of the updated full policy was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the Collections Development Policy for Preston Hall Museum be approved to enable a submission for reaccreditation to be made.

**CAB 122/12 Delegation of NNDR1 Return/Financial Implications to Parish Councils of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

Members considered a report relating to the new Business Rates retention scheme.

It was explained that within the new scheme, the NNDR1 return would set out the Council's forecast Business Rates income for the forthcoming year.

This forecast would be used to calculate:

- The "central share" – the 50% to be paid to Government
- The fire authority share – 1%
- The Council's share – 49%

It would also be used to form part of the calculation for levy / safety net payments.

The Council's 49% share, plus top up or minus tariff, makes up the business rates income for budget setting purposes.

The Council was required to set its NNDR1 figure for 2013/2014 on or before 31 January 2013.

The starting point for the calculation would be the actual position at 30 September 2012 (factual information taken from an extract of the Council's Business Rates system, frozen at the relevant date). The Council was required to adjust the figure to take account of an estimate of the change in rateable value between 1 October 2012 and 30 September 2013. This estimate would take into consideration factors such as:

- Local knowledge
- Trend data
- Corporate strategy (such as the local business rates discount scheme for Stockton Town Centre)
- The outcome of appeals that are going through the appeals process.

The Regulations that would underpin the Business Rates Retention Scheme would come into force before the start of the 2013-2014 financial year. They were currently in draft form and were worded in a way that required the billing authority to carry out the required calculations of business rates income and central/local shares, however the advice was that these tasks could be delegated in line with usual governance practices.

It was recommended that Cabinet/Council delegate responsibility to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance.

Members were reminded that Council Tax Benefits would no longer be paid through Department for Work and Pensions and that the Council would receive a grant to fund the discounts attributable. This grant was at 10% lower than the previous levels of discount and the full financial implications had been covered in previous reports.

It had been recognised that there would be a financial impact on Town and Parish Councils, as awards of local council tax support were classed as discounts and had the effect of reducing the council tax base. There had been a Government consultation exercise considering how this should be handled. The Government had advised that Local Authorities would receive, as part of



the grant to cover the cost of local council tax support discounts, an element to cover the impact on Town and Parish Councils. Local Authorities needed to determine whether to pass this grant through to Town and Parish Councils or whether to retain this funding and so pass on a financial pressure. The impact across the Borough was approximately £100,000 and it was therefore recommended that this be passed to the Town and Parish Councils to compensate for their loss.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that:-**

- 1. the annual setting of the Council's NNDR1 return figure (estimated business rates income), and calculation of the appropriate central/local shares, be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance and that the Council's Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly.**
  
- 2. It agree to fund the financial shortfall for Town and Parish Councils in 2013/14 due to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, which was £100,000, from the element of the grant allocated to the Council for this purpose. It is also recommended that support be maintained at this level for future years, unless the amount of funding attributable to town and parish councils can be separately identified, in which case the amount of grant received each year will be passed on.**