

## **Cabinet**

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Wednesday, 15th January, 2014.

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

**Officers:** N Schneider (CE); J Danks, L King (R); P Dobson, R Poundford, C Straughan (DNS); J Humphreys, L Brown(CESC); M Waggott, M Jones, K Wannop, P K Bell (LD).

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Derek Brown, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Mick Stoker (Chair of Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee) and members of the public.

**Apologies:** Cllr David Coleman.

### **CAB Declarations of Interest**

**113/13**

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Tees Credit Union as he was on the Tristar Board.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Tees Credit Union as her son had received a payment from Tristar Homes to help with flood damage.

Councillor Rose declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Tees Credit Union as he was a member of Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial in respect of agenda item 9 - Building Capacity & Resilience in the Organisation “Shaping a Brighter Future” as she was the Chair of NEREO.

### **CAB Minutes**

**114/13**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **CAB LA Nominations**

**115/13**

In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school / academy governors, approved as Minute CAB 27/13 of the Cabinet (13 June 2013), Cabinet is invited to consider the nominations to school/academy Governing Bodies listed in the Appendix to this report.

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

Mandale Mill Primary School - Diane Lenighan  
St. Therese of Lisieux RC Primary School - Kevin Salter  
The Management Committee of Bishopton Centre Pupil Referral Unit - Mrs Lynda Brown  
Thornaby Academy - Tracey Stott (Lab)  
Whinstone Primary School - Alison Stephenson

**CAB**      **Children's Centre Performance Review**  
**116/13**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the performance of the Children's Centres in the Borough.

There were 12 Children's Centres in Stockton, which provided geographical coverage of the whole Borough.

As part of the Early Years EIG review in 2011/12 a decision was made to operate 12 Children's Centres in Stockton, providing geographical cover of the whole Borough. It was also agreed that 8 of these Children's Centres would be commissioned. The Council was to retain operational management responsibility for 4 Children's Centres. Following a procurement exercise which was undertaken in 2012, two organisations, Big Life Families and 4Children, were awarded contracts to run the commissioned Centres. The location of these centres, and the organisation responsible for the running of them, was shown at Table 1 within the report. Big Life Families and 4Children took over management of the centres on 1st June 2012 with full delivery of services commencing in September 2012.

The location of the Children's Centres and the areas they serve was attached to the report. These areas were described as 'Reach areas'. A Reach Area was a designated geographical area that could be likened to a school admissions zone. In the same way, the critical information was the number of children 0-5 residing in that area.

Children's Centres were described as targeted or non-targeted. This reflected the socio-economic profile of the area they served. Targeted Children's Centres were those with a high proportion of LSOA's in the bottom 30% nationally. The non-targeted centres may well have pockets of deprivation in the area the Children's Centre served, and may have some LSOAs in the bottom 30% nationally, but generally, they supported the more affluent communities (those in the top 70% LSOA's, nationally). In Stockton, there were 8 targeted and 4 non-targeted Children's Centres and Table 1 also noted which Children's Centres were targeted and which were non-targeted. The funding that the Council made available for the running of Children's Centres varied significantly for targeted and non-targeted centres with the majority of the resource going to the targeted centres.

Children's Centres were judged and graded by Ofsted on their ability to meet the core purpose of a Children's Centre, as described in the Statutory Guidance published in April 2013, which was, 'to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support in order to reduce inequalities in: child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills; and child and family health and life chances'. When Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of a Children's Centre three key judgements are made. These reflected:-

- access to services
- quality and impact of services
- effectiveness of leadership, governance and management of the centre

Ofsted would conclude an overall judgement on a Children's Centre which would be one of the following: Outstanding (Grade 1), Good (Grade 2), Requires Improvement (Grade 3) or Inadequate (Grade 4). The "Requires Improvement" category was 'Satisfactory' in earlier frameworks.

Four Stockton Children's Centres were inspected between October 2010 and April 2012. High Flyers, Star, Sunrise and Redhill centres all achieved a 'good' judgement. In April 2013 the Ofsted framework was revised. Footsteps and Frederick Natrass Children's Centres were inspected under this revised and more challenging framework. They were judged to be satisfactory. Riverbank, New Life, Elm Tree, Layfield, Barley Fields and Northern Community Children's Centres had not been inspected by Ofsted. This information was included in Table 1 of the report.

In April 2013 Ofsted replaced the framework once more. It was in the 2013 framework that the previous 'satisfactory' judgement was replaced with 'Requires Improvement'. The framework stated that Children's Centres would be inspected within five years of opening and then at five-yearly intervals. No Children's Centres in Stockton had been inspected under this framework, although it was anticipated that those Centres that had not been inspected to date would be prioritised by Ofsted.

The Local Authority was ultimately responsible for all Children's Centres, whether they were commissioned or retained. As such, the Council had in place robust governance and partnership arrangements so that the Council were able to monitor the performance of Children's Centres and maximise opportunities to deliver shared strategic objectives that would make a difference to children across the Borough.

A Children's Centre Strategic Partnership provided a strategic overview and ensured that collaborative working took place. The Local Authority Chairs this Group. Members included Health, Job Centre Plus, the Council (Social Care, Education, Performance), Big Life Families and 4Children. Other groups were in place to lead on specific aspects of Children's Centre business and performance. Partner agencies including Health, Midwifery, Social Care and other relevant council departments were represented on the Groups as appropriate. A diagram showing these arrangements was attached to the report.

Data was fundamental to Children's Centres and a key focus for Ofsted Inspections. Table 2 within the report provided information on Children's Centre registrations, by setting. However, the percentages of children registered need care in their evaluation as inspectors would also take into account the following:-

- The increase in registrations over time
- The percentage of vulnerable children registered, which is of significant importance
- Continued engagement of children and families who access services after registration

This detail was included in the data sets which were used at the Annual Conversation and performance monitoring meetings and would influence the concluding judgements made by Officers.

A key aspect of the Local Authority performance management process was 'The Annual Conversation' which took place with each centre. This was the responsibility of the Chief Adviser who, through the Annual Conversations, assessed the quality and impact of services in each Children's Centre. A formal written record was made, an anonymised example of which was attached to the report. The first annual conversations took place in March 2013. Each Centre was required to complete a self-evaluation form which included relevant data. This process resulted in judgements and priorities for the Children's Centre to take forward.

Table 3 within the report showed Ofsted outcomes and judgements from the Annual Conversations which provided the latest summary position. It was noted that the Annual Conversation Evaluation judgement in this table were based on the previous Ofsted framework.

The priorities that emerged from the Annual Conversations were included in the development plans for each Children's Centre as these were the actions that would result in improved outcomes and performance. For completeness, the priorities that emerged from the 12/13 Annual Conversations were attached to the report. Progress against these priorities, which were monitored on a quarterly basis at a formal performance meeting, and any associated impact on Ofsted judgements and/or Annual Conversations would be recorded and reported in future reports to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB**      **Economic Climate Update Report**  
**117/13**

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

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

The monthly update report would enable a focussed account to be made of any recent changes to economic circumstances (both positive and negative), the direct impact that this may be having on the Borough, and the responses and mitigations either in place or being developed to support businesses and residents. Attached to the report was a summary of those changes and responses.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development updated Members with regard to the INshops at Thornaby and the help that the Council was providing to the businesses that were located in the premises.

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

**CAB**     **Tees Credit Union**  
**118/13**

Consideration was given to a report on the Tees Credit Union. The report provided Members with information in relation to Tees Credit Union, work underway to support its continued development and sustainability and progress to date.

Tees Credit Union (TCU) was established in 1993 and was originally known as Thornaby Credit Union, offering savings and loans to those who lived or worked in Thornaby. By 2009 it had implemented its plans to expand coverage across the whole Borough encompassing the business of Central Stockton and Stockton North's Credit Unions (the only other registered credit unions in the Borough).

TCU was regulated and controlled by the Financial Conduct Authority with members finances safeguarded through the Financial Services Compensation Scheme up to a limit of £85k.

A credit union was a community-based financial co-operative that provided affordable financial services to its members. The membership was based around a common bond which restricted TCU to an area of operation across the borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

TCU had its own governance arrangements in place via a Board of 7 Trustees, 2 of who assist with the operational running of TCU. It had 2 paid employees (The Manager and administrative support) and a number of volunteers. It was currently producing a volunteer information pack to help with the recruitment of additional volunteers to grow its operating capacity.

TCU was funded through a mixture of grants from health funding and Tristar Homes, alongside its income from loans, which supported the operational costs. Charities Commission recommendation was that organisations had sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of 6 months operating costs – Tees Credit Union was in a healthy position in relation to this recommendation.

Following an approach by TCU to SBC with a request for funding in 2010 TCU were supported in undertaking a self-assessment against the Association of British Credit Unions Ltd standards. This self-assessment and a multi-agency workshop instigated by Alex Cunningham MP identified a number of development strands that were required for the TCU to be in a sustainable position for the future. TCU submitted a successful bid to the SBC Investment Fund to fund a Compliance Officer to ensure that TCU was fully compliant with ABCUL's code of Governance. (Association of British Credit Union's).

TCU were also supported to make bids to the Barclays Community Fund (both of which were unsuccessful – the funding went to larger organisations.)

With support from Five Lamps, TCU subsequently submitted a bid to the Northern Rock Foundation to undertake some work on a feasibility study and

subsequent development of an outline business plan. The feasibility study identified that:-

- TCU had an emerging business strategy
- It needed to continue with its efforts to improve governance and operational systems
- It needed to grow to achieve an improved offer to its customers and in relation to its operational effectiveness, maximise economies of scale and achieve financial self-sustainability (including considering the feasibility of merger)
- It should consider sharing platforms for membership and operational services with other credit unions under the Northern Money initiatives
- It required an investment of around £70k to create the required internal capacity

Following the receipt of the feasibility study and outline business plan a further bid was made to the 2013 SBC Investment fund which was approved (£43K) and was supporting the work of a multi-agency Change Team established in 2013. The Change Team were assisting TCU in developing and implementing a robust business plan (building on the detail of the outline business plan) to improve its sustainability, further develop its offer, enhance its governance, assess and improve its systems, promote and market its service to reach those most in need of its services and to ensure it is well placed to compete with high-cost lenders. It was expected that a further bid would be made to Northern Rock Foundation to implement specific elements of the new business plan, early in 2014.

The Change Team was led by the CEO of Five Lamps. An attachment to the report showed details of Change Team Members.

Since the Change Team was established a number of developments had taken place as outlined below. These would be further developed and added to pending the outcome of the Change Matters assessment.

#### Vision and Culture

- A 'change matters' self-assessment is being undertaken by the development officer, in advance of the development of a revised business plan, with a clear and timely strategic focus that identifies the skills and knowledge required to implement it. The elements within the Change Matters framework are detailed at Appendix 3. Change Matters is a performance framework developed and supported by the Community Development Finance Association.
- Feasibility of other models of delivery is being explored, for example, the DotCommunity model, merger with other credit unions etc.
- A series of key performance indicators have been identified to support TCU Board in monitoring its performance and to help establish growth and capacity targets

#### Leadership and Management

- Additional Directors have been recruited to the Board, adding to the skills mix

- Further targeting for additional Board Members will take place pending the outcome of a skills audit
- Additional volunteers are being recruited (a volunteer pack, including role descriptors, is being developed to support the recruitment drive early in 2014) to provide additional capacity to deal with business growth.

#### Governance

- The TCU Board recently took a decision, which has been approved, to extend its common bond area to Durham and North Yorkshire to allow it to operate across other geographical areas at an appropriate point in the future, pending the development of their capacity.

#### Marketing and Communications

- Payroll deduction scheme has been rolled out across SBC (already in place in Tristar) with plans to reach other large employers, starting with schools.
- Improvements have been made to marketing materials and website
- Additional collection points have been opened (List of collection points is attached at Appendix 4)
- A pre-paid card is being rolled out, which includes cash-back offers and discounts
- Discussions have taken place in relation to having a 'high street presence' and is being considered linked to capacity to service
- Discussions are scheduled to take place with Teesside University in relation to securing additional support for marketing

#### Business Processes and systems

- Capital has been released to support access to affordable loans
- Feasibility work has been undertaken in relation to establishing online access to accounts and agreement reached on implementation via a web-based system.
- Some systems work has been undertaken, in partnership with Darlington Credit Union, to improve understanding of active membership to support the development of the on-going business model and in relation to sharing back office services with other credit unions

Over the last 3 years adult membership had increased by 41% and junior membership by 42%. Following a review of the membership figures and activity and associated data cleansing, by the Development Officer, there were a total of around 800 active adult members of which 232 were borrowers. As a proportion of the borough population and compared with other credit unions the levels of membership were low. This was recognised by the TCU Board and the Change Team. Increasing membership through further product development and promotion was a feature within the business plan but was clearly linked to the need to enhance the capacity of TCU to cope with additional demand through streamlining business processes, making the most effective use of IT as well as recruiting additional volunteers. A clear set of targets for membership growth were being developed alongside a suite of operational and sustainability performance indicators against which the Board could measure and track progress.

Tees Credit Union was based within South Thornaby Community Centre in office accommodation provided free of charge by Five Lamps. As TCU enhanced its capacity alternative accommodation would need to be sourced. It also delivered its services via a network of outreach sites and these were attached to the report.

The services currently offered include:-

- Regulated savings
- Low cost loans
- Junior savings
- Christmas savings
- Pre-paid card facilities
- A bill-paying budget account
- Direct Debit facilities
- Standing Order facilities
- Family funeral plan
- Money management and budgeting advice
- Access to electrical goods (Co-op)
- Quit and save initiative (smoking cessation and saving service)

The changes in relation to the Local Strategic Partnership and its focus on tackling family poverty through 'A Brighter Borough for All' with its priorities of ensuring every child had the best start in life and maximising family income, provide an opportunity for Infinity (the borough's financial inclusion forum) and TCU to link in with the locality forum task and finish groups, particularly in relation to any activity associated with maximising family income. Early discussions had taken place with Infinity and TCU.

The combination of the recruitment of additional directors to the TCU Board, the establishment of the Change Team and the investment via Northern Rock, Tristar and SBC, alongside recognition by the TCU Board of the need for change were starting to see some encouraging steps forward.

There was more work to do in order to ensure that Tees Credit Union was well-placed to deliver ethical community financial services and products across the borough in a climate where levels of debt were increasing and the market for high cost and new lending models were rapidly changing. It was anticipated that this positive direction of travel would continue following receipt of the Change Matters assessment, the Sustainable Business Plan and future funding bid to Northern Rock Foundation to support its implementation.

Capacity within TCU was limited; therefore the work to support them in terms of sustainability development needs to be managed strategically, via the Change Team, to avoid the risk of competing and divergent demands on their time.

The Change Team were of the view that there needed to be some funding made available in the short-medium term to enhance the capacity within TCU to implement the business plan and recommendations from the Change Team. It was expected that this would be the focus for a submission to Northern Rock Foundation in January/February.



RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB 119/13 Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee Review of North East Procurement Organisation**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee's comments following the external independent review of the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO). NEPO provided a collaborative procurement shared service across the twelve North East local authorities, governed by a Joint Committee of which each member had two seats. The organisation underwent a major review and change in direction in 2010 and, as it was timely to consider the success of those changes and whether further change was necessary, the NEPO Joint Committee and regional chief executives appointed an independent consultant to review the operating structure in late 2012/13.

Stockton's Corporate & Social Inclusion Committee had considered the report from the external, independent review and evidence in regards to Stockton's needs for procurement.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Select Committee supports and endorses the decision made by Leaders and Mayors and the NEPO Joint Committee to create a smaller and re-focused NEPO that reports through ANEC.
2. The Select Committee supports and endorses the need to develop and implement a revised structure for a re-focussed NEPO with appropriate number and grade of posts and management structure given the changed accountability arrangements with ANEC.
3. Following the work of the committee in reviewing the areas of external third party expenditure that should be procured at a regional level, the Select Committee recommends the following list is put forward to feed into the NEPO transition process.
  - Clothing & Uniforms
  - Mail Services
  - Office, Commercial & Domestic Furniture
  - Stationery
  - Fuel
  - Vehicle Leasing, Hire and Purchase (but to include flexibility to procure at both local and national level depending on the particular requirement and situation)
  - Vehicle Parts – tyres and tubes
  - Playgrounds & Horticultural Equipment & Materials (but to include flexibility to procure at both local and national depending on the particular requirement and situation)
  - School & Library Books
  - Electricity, Gas and Water

- Cleaning & Janitorial Services
- Arts & Craft, Toys, Audio Visual & Sports Equipment Supplies
- Financial Services (but limited to banking and audit)
- Temporary, Interim and Agency Staff (except for trade and manual workers which is done at local level)
- Social Care - Equipment and Adaptations

4. The Select Committee recommends that a further report is presented to the Select Committee when the details of the revised NEPO scope and structure has been developed.

**CAB 120/13 Building Capacity & Resilience in the Organisation "Shaping a Brighter Future"**

Consideration was given to a report on Building Capacity & Resilience in the Organisation "Shaping a Brighter Future". The organisation was facing one of the most challenging periods in its history as it strives to deliver services in the face of:-

- unprecedented reductions in funding,
- huge growth in demand for services
- fundamental changes due to welfare reforms and
- changes in the delivery structures for public health and social care services
- Potential changes to the delivery of strategic economic development linked to the LEP and City Deal.

Members were aware of the plans that were in place to deliver the changes that were needed to meet these challenges and could be confident that the Service Reviews, Big Ticket Reviews and the work of the Welfare Reform Project board would deliver what was needed to ensure that the Council deliver the Council Plan and MTFP objectives.

The purpose of the report was to brief Cabinet about a further programme of work that would be undertaken to underpin all of the projects and programmes of work. The "Shaping a Brighter Future" programme would support and develop employees to help them to meet the challenges the Council was facing.

The Council had a long and strong track record of investing in the people and developing and growing its own talent and capacity in the organisation. Now, more than ever, it was important that the Council build on this work and support and develop employees so that they were able to continue to deliver a great service to the Borough.

The background and context for the capacity-building work that was being planned was one of huge challenges and huge potential.

The financial context did not need repeating in detail here. However the background of achieving £22m of annual savings over the last 4 years and the need to take a further £20 million out by 2017/18. The reduction in 600 posts over the last 4 years and another 300 posts by 2017/18 and the increase in demand for our services was obviously the most significant challenge facing the workforce. There were however a number of other factors which combined to

bring additional challenges.

The Council had an ageing workforce which meant that it was regularly facing the loss of extremely experienced and knowledgeable staff through retirement. 40% of the workforce were over the age of 50.

This loss of experienced employees leaves a large gap. The loss of experienced staff has occurred throughout the organisation and in significant proportions at Head of Service level where we have seen a reduction in 7 experienced Heads of Service over the last 3 years.

There were signs of increased stress and fatigue in the organisation. The latest sickness absence statistics for the 6 months to 30 September 2013 showed an increase in absence levels which was a serious concern and was in itself the focus of intensive work. Sickness absence at 30th September 2013 was 6.95 days lost per FTE. This had increased from the same period last year which was 4.92 days per FTE. The days lost had increased by 25%. Absence due to 'stress/depression/ mental health/fatigue' continued to be the highest reason for absence and also showed the highest increase in days lost when comparing the 2011/12 information. Whilst the stress related absences were not in many cases due to work related stress this was an important context to the environment within which employees were working. Sickness absence levels (for whatever cause) increase the pressure on remaining employees to meet ongoing service needs.

The increased levels of pressure that were seen in the absence numbers was consistent with the feedback throughout the organisation and with the information gathered through the staff survey.

However, despite these challenges it was important to remember that the Council had huge potential and talent in the organisation and it continued to deliver great services. 2013 marked the fourth year in a row that the Council was nominated for the APSE Council of the Year award, the Council had positive feedback from residents and businesses and had a host of nationally recognised accreditations and awards across its services.

The Council had a strong track record and culture of employee development. The Council had invested in its employees and remained committed to this. The Council had a long history of commitment to the Investor In People programme with long standing Service accreditations, a Silver accreditation for the whole organisation in 2009, followed by full reaccreditation in 2012. The Council national award-winning manager training programme, the active staff forums, the recent Innovation Challenge sessions run as part of the Setting the Standard programme, our competency framework, the newly re-designed appraisal process, employee support programme and coaching network all combined to provide development and support to the dedicated workforce. This provided a great base from which to build. The "Shaping a Brighter Future" programme would not need to completely replace these effective mechanisms it could enhance and build on them.

The Council had a dedicated, high performing and committed workforce who care about their work and enjoy being part of the Council. The results of the 2012 Employee Survey showed that 92% of employees who responded said

that they enjoy working at the Council and think that it was a good place to work.

The programme of work the Council planned to begin reflected these realities and accepted that the Council had a responsibility and duty to support and develop employees through these challenging times.

The challenge of building greater capacity and resilience in the organisation would be delivered through a programme to be called "Shaping a Brighter Future". The detail of the programme would be developed over the first quarter of 2014 and will be reported back to Cabinet in March.

The principle of the programme was that it would be designed to build more capacity in the organisation by investing in our own people and growing our own talent to increase capability through personal and team development. In recognising that the organisation faces an reduction in resources over the coming years the programme aims to

- Build capability
- Increase capacity
- Increase resilience and success

The Chief Executive would be leading on the work in collaboration with an experienced specialist in organisational change work – Mel Nixon. Mel who had worked for many years with NEREO and many Local Authorities and had agreed, due to his long term working relationship with the Chief Executive, to provide his services free of charge to this project for the next 5 years. His commitment to the SBC as an organisation reflects his belief in the potential of it's people and his identification with the big plans for the Borough.

In recognition of this commitment it is recommended that a charitable trust be established in the name of Liz Nixon (Mel's late wife). The trust would be used to fund apprenticeships at the Council for young people of the Borough. The trust would be particularly targeted at vulnerable young people and Looked After Children.

The programme would be supported and delivered by the Corporate Management Team and by a working group of individuals from within the organisation who would be brought together to work on aspects of the programme. The working arrangements for this group would be worked up as the plan was defined.

The programme would be delivered over the next 5 years. Whilst some benefits would be realised in the short term it was important to recognise that this was not a short term fix. It was essential to create the right culture to tackle any challenges that were thrown at the organisation and this would take time.

The programme plan would be developed over the next few months and would be developed around the following elements:-

- Defining and communicating the culture of the organisation

- Reviewing the structures in the organisation to ensure that we have the right people in right place
- Establishing an improved approach to succession planning
- Building a programme to ensure that individuals operate to their maximum potential by identifying and delivering on development needs
- Reviewing the operation of our teams to ensure they are working to maximum effect
- Developing a more robust selection and recruitment process
- Developing a talent identification and development process

The culture of the organisation was, to some extent, already set out in the agreed Competency Framework (<http://kyit.stockton.gov.uk/hr/workforcedevelopinfo/comprframework>) which was developed with input from employees across the organisation. It in turn was used as the basis of the corporate branding work which summarised the nature of the organisation in the following phrase:-

“AMBITIOUS, EFFECTIVE AND PROUD TO SERVE.

This is a Council that prides itself on being open, honest and fair. On leading by example. On having big plans and the determination to see them through. On delivering genuine value for money. On setting the highest standards of public service. On communicating clearly and regularly with the community it serves. On being challenging, innovative and well organised. On all of these fronts and more, we're on with it.”

The work to develop the definition of the culture of the organisation would not start again from scratch and would not abandon the many very valuable competencies which had already been identified. Work would be undertaken to update, refine and clarify what the Council already had and ensure that it was fit for purpose for the challenges that would be faced over the next 5 years.

The Council always had the structures and responsibilities in the organisation under review to ensure that the Council had the “right people in the right places”. Current structures would be looked at to ensure that these account for the many changes that were arising as a result of the Service Reviews, the changes in delivery of public services and the rising demand for services in many areas such as in Children’s and Adults Social Care.

The formalisation and development of the succession planning processes was essential particularly in light of the age profile of the workforce and as an essential element of developing resilience in the organisation and meaningful and valuable development opportunities for employees.

A programme would be developed to ensure that the Council continued to encourage employees to identify their own development needs and to provide effective support to individuals to fulfil their potential. This programme would again build on the processes already in place through the appraisal system but would provide new methods and more sophisticated resources to help identify needs and tailor development plans.

The optimisation of personal performance would be complemented by increased investment in the work of the teams in the organisation.

The selection and recruitment process would be reviewed and revised to incorporate additional measurement and testing techniques. It was anticipated that a number of personality, profiling and cognitive style assessments may usefully be incorporated into the current competency based approach to enhance and improve the processes currently used. These additional tools would help the Council to enhance further the commitment to open, fair and positive recruitment and would help identify development needs and potential right from the start of an employee's time with the organisation.

Work would be undertaken to review how talented employees were identified within the organisation and how career development plans were developed.

All elements of the programme would be worked up in detail and combined in a 5 year plan which would be brought to Cabinet for approval in March 2014.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The planned work to build capacity in the organisation be noted and the development of a detailed action plan be supported to be presented to Cabinet in March 2014.
2. The creation of the Liz Nixon Charitable Trust be approved and authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Finance, to establish the legal and governance arrangements for the trust.

**CAB 121/13 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document**

Consideration was given to a report on Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 and The Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, 2012

The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document (LDD) would, when adopted, form part of Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan which would provide the local policy basis for the determination of planning applications within the Borough.

The LDD was being produced as a result of national planning policy contained within Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which required local authorities to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites against locally set targets. Failure to provide allocations to meet the identified need would make it far more likely that the Council would lose appeals if planning applications were refused, resulting in additional costs and piecemeal development of Gypsy and Traveller sites. It was also likely that the Regeneration and Environment Local Development Document would be found unsound if the Council did not identify a site allocation in the Local Plan.

The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD would

make provision for the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers within Stockton-on-Tees Borough through the allocation of sites based on the need for pitches identified within the Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, 2012. The intention of the document was not to identify a site for the Council to develop and run but to allocate suitable land for such a use should members of the Gypsy and Traveller community choose to do so.

The Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, 2012 formed the part of the evidence base for the LDD and identified a need for 26 pitches within the Borough until 2027. This study updated the findings of a Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (TVGTAA) which was published in 2009 and identified a requirement of 34 pitches for the Borough until 2021.

The LDD required a period of public consultation before it could be moved on to the next stage in production. The report sought the agreement of Cabinet for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD, Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment and the updated Needs Assessment to be made available for a period of public consultation.

The LDD set out Council's approach to allocating sites within the Borough and included consideration of issues relating to the need for transit pitches and accommodation for Travelling Showpeople, although it was not proposed to allocate transit pitches or plots for Travelling Showpeople at this stage. The main focus of the document was upon the provision of permanent residential pitches due to the need identified within the 2012 GTAA Update.

The LDD provided details of the minimum requirements for an acceptable residential pitch and sets out a number of options for the distribution of sites within the Borough. The Council's preferred option for site allocations was informed at a Member's policy briefing on 29 October 2013 and involved the allocation of one larger site of up to 15 pitches and the remaining need of 11 pitches provided on smaller sites.

6 site options for allocation were detailed within the LDD, which was attached to the report, and were as follows:-

- Land to the rear of Roddmere, Yarm Back Lane, Stockton
- Land on Frederick Street, Stockton
- Land between Bowesfield Crescent and the River Tees, Stockton
- Land on Mill Lane, Billingham
- Land on Eltham Crescent, Thornaby
- Land between the River Tees and Thornaby Road, Thornaby

These included one privately owned site and 5 Council owned pieces of land that had been shortlisted through a technical assessment of sites. The document also included an invitation to landowners, or those with an interest in an area of land, to submit sites for consideration as an allocation.

The sites identified within the LDD were options for potential allocation and were not all required to meet the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Other sites may be submitted during the consultation period and the boundaries of

some or all of the current site options may be reduced, or otherwise altered, as a result of further assessments prior to the next stage of the LDD. Similarly, the potential yield figures included within the LDD for each site are an indication of the expected potential of each site. Some sites, if developed, may provide less pitches than the estimate.

Following endorsement by Cabinet and Full Council, the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 together with the supporting documents and assessments would be made available for a period of public consultation scheduled to commence on 3 February 2014 for a period of 6 weeks, closing on 17 March 2014.

During the period of public consultation, the Council would seek to involve the statutory consultees, members of the public and other stakeholders through:-

- The provision of a public notice;
- Publishing any relevant documents on the Council's website
- Making information and relevant documents available in Planning reception and in all libraries in the Borough
- Writing letters and emails to everyone on the Local Development Framework Consultation Database, informing them of the process for getting involved
- Writing and distributing press releases to local media;

It was considered necessary to take further steps to ensure that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities were involved in the consultation and a consultation strategy had been developed in association with officers from the Communications and Policy, Improvement and Engagement teams.

Following the public consultation period, the comments received would inform the further development of the document and the selection of the preferred site/s for allocation. The next stage of the document was Publication and it was expected that the Publication Draft of the LDD would be released for public consultation in July 2014 with adoption of the final document being in May 2015.

#### **RECOMMENDED to Council that:-**

- 1. The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 and its associated assessments (Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)) for a period of public consultation be endorsed;**
- 2. The findings of the Stockton-on-Tees GTAA Update 2012 be endorsed as the evidence base for the LDD;**
- 3. Any further changes to the documents prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport.**