

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 24th April, 2014.

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

Officers: J Danks, B Brown, L King, (R); P Dobson, R McGuckin, R Poundford, (DNS); J Humphreys, L Brown, L Hanley (CESC); P Kelly, S Bowman (PH) M Waggott, J Nertney, J Trainer, P K Bell (LD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs Clark (Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee), Cllr Mrs O'Donnell (Chair of the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee), Cllr Johnson (Vice Chair of the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee), Cllr Cherrett (Chair of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee), Members of the Public.

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon.

CAB 1/14

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion as she was as she was the Chair SDAIS.

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion as she was as he was a member of SDAIS.

Councillor Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014-2015 as his wife was a child minder.

Councillor Rose declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Flood Investigation Report as he was a member of the Environment Agency's Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, and its Programming and Investment Group and the Chair of Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Joint Committee.

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Flood Investigation Report as she was the Chair of High Clarence School Board of Governors and a house owned by her son was flooded on 5th December 2013.

Councillor Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 13 - Economic Climate Update Report as his daughter and son in law were employed by NPower.

CAB 2/14

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB 3/14

Scrutiny Review of Employment and Education

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Children & Young

People Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Employment and Education. The review considered how education and business could work together to ensure that learning provision matches local industry need and focused on the 14 – 19 age group (25 years for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities).

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Council work with local businesses and employers, schools and post 16 education and training providers to develop an action plan to deliver the following objectives:-

- greater interaction between schools/ colleges and local business
- helping young people remain in education and training which leads to progression into further education and employment
- promoting awareness of the job market, growth sectors and employment opportunities both locally and further afield, as part of independent careers guidance for Key Stage 4 and post 16, including the development of a job search tool and improved website access to job information and access to an annual job fair event/ promotional activities
- enhance the employability of young people
- provide more and varied opportunities for work experience
- provide support in applying for further education and employment opportunities including practical support in making applications

2. Funding avenues are pursued in order to deliver these objectives.

3. Council services continue to work closely together to deliver the action plan.

4. The Committee welcomes and supports Stockton Youth Assembly's local campaign topics which include better work experience and apprenticeships.

5. The Director of Children, Education and Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People write to all Stockton Schools and Chairs of School Governing Bodies drawing attention to the Select Committee report and emphasising the importance of interaction with local businesses and employers as part of the provision of quality careers information and guidance and encouraging all Secondary Governing Bodies to appoint a governor champion for Enterprise and Employment and consider placing a regular item on Governing Body meetings.

6. The Children and Young People Select Committee receive reports on the performance of post 16 education providers as part of their quarterly performance reporting framework

**CAB
4/14 Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty. The review sought to understand the impact of child poverty on a child's health and

education and make recommendations on local action to help prevent and mitigate against this.

It was agreed that a Members Seminar should take place on work of Dr George McGonigle.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Committee supports and encourages the shift of resources from reaction to prevention and early intervention, in line with the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and as part of the Council's strategic approach and financial strategy.
2. A myth busting guide is produced for use by Councillors and staff to challenge some of the myths and the stigmatisation of people experiencing poverty.
3. The Committee support the contribution of the locality forums together with other forums and bodies such as Catalyst in the mapping of support and advice and that progress reports on this work be submitted to the Select Committee as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the review recommendations.
4. The Committee supports the implementation plan of the Early Help Strategy, to ensure Early Help services (including mental health and emotional health services) are aligned and co-ordinated.
5. Officers work with other partner agencies (e.g. the CCG as commissioner) to further explore the provision of speech and language therapy to children, particularly those most vulnerable, in order to input to future discussions on commissioning and/or development of these services.
6. A communication plan is developed to deliver general and targeted publicity on income maximisation and benefit take-up.
7. Officers explore opportunities to raise awareness of benefit eligibility and other support through residents' contact with universal services.
8. The "A Fairer Start Project" being piloted in Stockton Town Centre be supported and that a report on the outcome of the pilot and feasibility of rolling out this model across the Borough be submitted to the Select Committee as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the review recommendations.
9. The Poverty Proofing the School Day initiative be supported and Stockton Schools be encouraged to take part in the project.
10. Signposting to financial help and other support together with details of free activities during the school holidays is distributed via pupils at the end of each school term.
11. Where children are refused access to school meals due to arrears,

schools are provided with information which they can use to speak to parents about financial help and support available.

12. Officers assess the evidence of the benefits of providing free school meals and breakfast clubs for all primary school children and investigate whether funding is available to conduct a pilot for children in Stockton Primary Schools.

13. The good practice underway in schools to minimise the impact of poverty on children is systematically disseminated to all schools and that all schools and academies are encouraged to implement this good practice.

14. The Committee supports the relevant recommendations of the scrutiny review on welfare reform and financial inclusion, which have synergies with the review on child poverty.

**CAB
5/14**

Scrutiny Review of Welfare Reform and Financial Inclusion

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the findings of the review of welfare reform and financial inclusion. The review was undertaken by Housing and Community Safety Select Committee. The review considered issues in relation to the impact of welfare reform in the Borough, Universal Credit, benefit sanctions, food poverty, crisis support and wider issues around financial inclusion.

Further scrutiny work would take place on this topic during 2014-15.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Further scrutiny work should take place during 2014-15 to continue to review the impact of welfare reform. This phase of work should include particular reference to Universal Credit including fraud investigation, food poverty, advice and information, and the local housing market.
2. The indicators used in the welfare monitoring framework are kept under review, and that consideration is given to including the workload of the animal welfare service as an additional measure, alongside the existing indicators including child protection activity.
3. The joint working across Council and partner agencies (including third sector and Registered Providers) to mitigate the effects of welfare changes and support residents should be supported and continued in future phases of reform.
4. Where appropriate, the Council and partners raise awareness of the advice available to residents who have had their benefits sanctioned, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups.
5. The Council should raise awareness of sustainable financial solutions for local residents, including advice, alternatives to high cost credit, and information on enforcement agencies including the Illegal Money Lending Team.

6. All Members should be provided with an information pack outlining the range of services available to residents that support the financial inclusion agenda.

7. Stockton Council and partners sign up to the Stockton Stop Loan Sharks charter and when implementing the Charter, particular emphasis should be given to raising awareness of the Illegal Money Lending Team, within targeted communities where appropriate.

8. A sustainable future for the 'Back on Track' funding and alternative methods of delivering 'crisis/short term' support is identified, and this be considered as part of the future scrutiny work on welfare reform.

CAB 6/14 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014 - 2015

Consideration was given to a report that outlined how the Local Authority (LA) was meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare and includes information about the supply of and demand for childcare, details on any gaps in provision and an action plan on how they would be addressed.

The Childcare Act (2006) and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – September 2013, required Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as was reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who were studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:-

- what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area;
- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- the state of the labour market; and
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers.

The Children and Families Act 2014 repealed the duty on the local authority to prepare assessments on the sufficiency of provision of childcare in their area at least every 3 years and replaced this with the duty to report annually to elected council members on how they were meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. There was also a requirement to make this report available and accessible to parents.

As part of the changes there was no longer a requirement to undertake consultation to support the Assessment.

Local authorities were responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication. However, the report should include:-

- a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places, school age children; and children needing holiday care.
- Information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

In addition, local authorities were required by legislation to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, ensuring parents were aware of:-

- Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
- The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
- How to identify high quality provision in their area.

The CSA Report provided information on how the Local Authority would meet its legal duty as detailed earlier in the report.

For planning purposes and to ensure consistency of approach, the delivery of early years and childcare services was brought together within the twelve Children's Centre Areas across the seven Early Years Communities.

The report provided the following:-

- Background and contextual information about the Borough regarding population and Labour Market Information (LMI).
- Early years and childcare information including Ofsted registrations, geographical distribution, vacancies, charging, opening and closing times and quality of provision.
- Details of identified gaps in childcare provision and key priorities.
- An Action Plan with timescales.

Stockton-on-Tees had a good range of quality childcare across the borough; however specific gaps in provision had been identified, as follows:-

Ensuring sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of disabled children:-

- There is a lack of understanding from parents regarding the availability of childcare for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).
- Information on childcare for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) must be included in the Local Offer for Stockton-on-Tees.
- Early years and childcare settings require clarity around the criteria for Early Years High Needs funding and the application process to ensure maximum accessibility for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

Ensuring sufficiency for children from families in receipt of the childcare element

of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit:-

- Low income areas have the lowest take up of Working Tax Credit childcare element.

Children aged two taking up early education places:-

- Insufficient 2 year olds, who are looked after, or eligible for a free school meal, accessing a place.
- Insufficient places available to meet the target for 2014.
- Improved marketing and promotion required to maximise take up.
- Lack of awareness by parents of the advantages of using a childminder.

Ensuring sufficiency for school age children:-

- Gaps in Thornaby have been identified due to lack of childminder provision in the area.

The Action Plan set out the actions that would need to be taken in order to address the identified gaps and key priorities. The detail of each action would be found in individual implementation plans held by the responsible officer / team. The action plan covers 2014 – 2015 and the implementation plans for the delivery of the specific actions identified would be found within individual team delivery plans.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014-2015 underpinned the Government's aim to ensure there was sufficient childcare, as far as was reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who were studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the associated priorities for 2014-2015 be approved.
2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan for 2014-2015 be approved.

**CAB
7/14**

Children's Centres Quality Assurance Outcomes - Spring 2014

Consideration was given to a report that was an update to the report presented to Cabinet on 16th January 2014. Members were informed in that report that a performance management structure was in place and as part of the monitoring, annual conversations took place with each centre to assess the quality and impact of services. The second annual conversations took place in February 2014 and the report detailed the outcomes of those conversations for all 12 children's centres.

The report provided an update on the performance of Stockton's 12 Children's Centres of which 8 were commissioned. Big Life Families managed Frederick

Natgrass, The Star (with Newtown)] and 4Children manage Barley Fields, Elm Tree, Layfield, New Life, Northern and Riverbank.

Children's Centres were judged and graded by Ofsted on their performance to meet the core purpose of a children's centre which the Department for Education describes as: 'to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on those in greatest need. Children's Centres must work to make sure all children are properly prepared for school, regardless of background or family circumstances. They also offer support to parents.' (revised January 2014.) Ofsted Inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the centre.

This was the overarching judgement.

In order to make a judgement about the overall quality of a centre, inspectors first make three key judgements. These were:-

- access to services by young children and families
- the quality and impact of practice and services
- the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.

In judging the quality of the provision and the impact of service provided by the centre, inspectors would decide whether the centre was 'outstanding' (grade 1), 'good' (grade 2), 'required improvement' (grade 3) or was 'inadequate' (grade 4). Prior to April 2013, when a more challenging Inspection Framework was introduced, the "Requires Improvement" judgement was "Satisfactory". Two Stockton Children's Centres were inspected in March 2014- Elm Tree and Barley Fields; reports were yet to be published.

A key aspect of the Local Authority performance process was 'The Annual Conversation' which took place with each centre. This was the responsibility of the Chief Adviser who, through the Annual Conversations, assesses the quality and impact of services in each Children's Centre and ensures key priorities for improvement were identified and actions to address the priorities were given. These actions were monitored at quarterly performance management meetings.

The second round of annual conversations took place in February 2014 and involved each centre completing a self-evaluation form including data and any other relevant information which was then submitted to the Education Improvement Service (EIS). The EIS team visited the centres and met with the centre manager; other key personnel joined the discussions as decided by the Centre Manager or as requested by the lead adviser to facilitate discussions. Discussions took place with reference to the SEF, data and any other information. Considering the evidence discussed against the Ofsted schedule, advisers reached final annual conversation judgements. Where the Centre's judgement differed from the advisers, reasons for the differences were clarified.

An appendix to the report identified the reach area by ward and shows the outcomes for all centres, including both partner and council managed centres, from the 2014 annual conversations.

Three key priorities were identified for each Centre which addressed the area of focus for the Centre and addressed the key priorities for the Borough as identified in the SBC Council Plan to 2015.

The Annual Conversation and subsequent Performance Management meetings contributed to the SBC Council plan key objective to have 'A robust performance and financial management framework' and the key objectives of the council plan addressed in the Children's Centre priorities were predominantly:-

- Narrow the attainment gap (ensuring school readiness)
- Improve targeted early intervention services (increasing access from targeted groups)
- Reduce Levels of Obesity in children and Young People (increase breastfeeding rates and other services to combat obesity)
- Reduce the impact of poverty on family life (increase opportunities for adult training and volunteering)
- Ensure all young people are in receipt of education, employment or training (improve partnership with schools and improve services to support pregnant teenagers and teen parents to access education and employability)
- Effective Community Engagement (increase number of users represented on Parent Forums and Advisory Boards)

A table within the report gave the three key priorities identified for each Children's Centre.

There had been 2 Children's Centre Inspections in March 2014 (subsequent to the Annual Conversation). Elm Tree was judged 'Requires Improvement', which was consistent with the Centre Self-Evaluation and the Annual Conversation Evaluation, whilst Barley Fields was judged 'Good', an improvement on the Centre Self-Evaluation and the Annual Conversation Evaluation, both of which were 'Requires Improvement'.

In both inspections, the improvement actions identified by Ofsted broadly reflected those identified by the local authority in the Annual Conversation.

A table within the report identified Annual Conversation Priorities and Ofsted Improvement Actions.

The focus for the Council would be on the performance management going forward in 2014 towards the next annual conversation to pursue completion of the actions to achieve the priorities agreed. Specific actions for the Council included:-

- Refining further the data available to Children Centres from Social Care so they can target families in need more accurately.
- Supporting the Children Centres through Ofsted inspection and learning from the findings to inform future improvements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB
8/14**

Executive Arrangements

Consideration was given to a report that detailed the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council regarding Cabinet Members, Cabinet Member portfolios and executive functions and delegated powers under the Council's Constitution. The Leader was committed to undertaking a full review of all Cabinet portfolios before the end of the municipal year

At the Annual Meeting on 2 April 2014 the Leader of the Council confirmed the continuing appointment of Cabinet Members as follows:-

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health - Councillor Beall

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure and Culture - Councillor Dixon

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport - Councillor Smith

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Mrs McCoy

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Finance - Councillor Harrington

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety - Councillor Nelson

The Cabinet Member for Environment - Councillor Rose

The Cabinet Member for Access and Communities - Councillor Coleman

The Leader also confirmed the portfolios of each Cabinet Member. The details were attached to the report.

The Leader was committed to undertaking a full review of all Cabinet portfolios before the end of the municipal year.

The Cabinet's executive functions and powers, including those delegated to Officers, had been agreed by the Leader, as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council, as outlined in the report, be noted.

**CAB
9/14**

Adults Safeguarding Peer Challenge

Consideration was given to a report that provided a summary of the review methodology and how initial feedback was reported to the Corporate Director. The full report was attached to the report.

The Review was undertaken over four days and focused on the outcome of people's experience of safeguarding.

The Review incorporated interviews with strategic partners, but due to the work to develop a Tees-wide Statutory Safeguarding Adults Board, the strategic adult safeguarding arrangements and structures were not a major focus of the review.

Prior to the review taking place, a self-assessment document, with supporting evidence, was provided to the Peer Review Team.

The Peer Review Team was made up of the following members:-

Martin Farran, Director of Adults & Communities, Barnsley Council;
Councillor Alan Kerr, Deputy Leader of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough;
Ian Winter CBE, Associate LGA ;
Ruth Allen, Director of Social Work, South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust ;
Maria Gray, Detective Constable, Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Metropolitan Police ;
Marcus Coulson, Challenge Manager, Local Government Association.

The team was on site from 3 – 6 February 2014 and met and spoke to a number of internal and external stakeholders including:-

- Carrying out interviews and discussions with Councillors, Officers and Partners;
- Conducting focus Groups with Managers, Practitioners, Frontline Staff and people using Services and Carers;

The full details of the Review timetable were attached to the report.

Twenty-seven case files were subject to audit by the Team and feedback from the Reviewer was positive, including additional notes that he provided to the Council after the review.

An overview of the key findings of the review was provided in a presentation to the Council on the last day of the Review.

The attached report provided more detail in relation to this initial information.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the report of the Peer Review Team be noted.
2. Cabinet receive the action plan and updates on progress in due course.

**CAB
10/14** **Flood Investigation**

Consideration was given to a report on the floods that had taken place on 5th December 2013.

On Thursday 5th December 2013, the Borough of Stockton on Tees was again subject to severe flooding. A high spring tide was forecast; the tide at Teesport was due to peak at 1704hrs, at a height of 2.85m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The forecast metrological conditions on that day were a strong off shore wind, with a deep area of low pressure forming in the North Sea; it was this low pressure system that caused the positive surge, on top of the already high tide. The positive surge measured 1.24m above the spring tide, giving a total tide height of 4.09m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum), which exceeded previous historical events.

Flooding could occur from various sources which were outlined in the report. The main source of flooding from this particular weather event was tidal flooding as described above, seeing defences overtopped and a major breach of the flood defence at Greatham Creek.

The incident caused damage and disruption, with up to 32 residential properties recorded as being internally flooded in Port Clarence, along with 20 businesses both large and small, in Port Clarence, Billingham Reach Industrial Estate and Seal Sands. There was also the additional issue of severe transport disruption due to three major highways being flooded.

At the peak of the event approximately 250 residents were evacuated from Port Clarence and taken by bus to Billingham Forum, which had been set up as a rest centre, where they were given food and other essential items. The majority of the residents returned to their properties when it was safe to do so, although up to 20 residents chose to stay for the night at the rest centre.

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, required Stockton on Tees Borough Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), to investigate flooding incidents within its area.

The Environment Agency had been allocated accelerated funding to build a flood defence scheme at Port Clarence and Greatham South. The scheme was being designed and would start on site in March 2015.

The Flood Investigation Report contained 6 recommendations for review of processes and advised residents to sign up to the Environment Agency FloodLine to receive future flood warnings.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The duty and responsibilities on Stockton Borough Council under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 – Section 19, Flood Investigation be noted.
2. The report for publication, as required by statute under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 be approved.

**CAB
11/14** **Rail Devolution and Local Rail Update**

Consideration was given to a report that updated Members on the situation regarding Rail Devolution following a report to Cabinet in March 2013 and informed Members of the on-going investment programme at the local level. In March 2012 the Government published a consultation document on potential options for devolving decision-making on passenger rail services in England. In response to the consultation, the concept of devolution was broadly welcomed by the Tees Valley authorities and their partners across the North East, who recognised the potential benefits it could deliver.

The Northern Rail and Transpennine franchises, both of particular interest to the Tees Valley, were identified as two of the franchises that the Government may

look to devolve. A consortium of Northern PTEs/ITAs known collectively as Rail North had emerged to develop proposals for greater involvement in the management of these franchises. Rail North submitted a business case to Government in late 2013 outlining these proposals that recognised the formation of a North East Business Unit (NEBU) which authorities in the North East feel would ensure a more focussed provision of rail services and investment for the region.

Since then the Government had formally reiterated support for the principle of devolution; however, there was a clear desire to move towards an arrangement whereby there was a more 'evolutionary' approach to devolution, with DfT taking a significant role within an initial partnership structure. Whilst details on the exact structure and governance were awaited, there was a clear need to ensure that the Tees Valley objectives were reflected in key Rail North workstreams such as their Long Term Rail Strategy and on-going Electrification of the National network. In order to ensure the North East's position was clear, a North East Rail Strategy was being developed and it was hoped that this would help to support some of the Tees Valley's priorities for rail in the on-going higher level discussions.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The on-going investment programme at the Borough's Rail Stations and the proposed masterplanning at Billingham Station be noted.
2. The current proposal of a partnership approach to Rail Devolution proposed by the Department for Transport and Rail North be noted.
3. The progress of the Long Term Rail Strategy for the North of England be noted.
4. The progress of the North East Rail Strategy and the Tees Valley position on Electrification be noted.
5. The Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport, will continue to work with other north east authorities through the LEP and ANEC structures to ensure that the north east interests are adequately considered within any proposed devolution mechanism.

**CAB
12/14 Economic Climate Update Report**

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.

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

**CAB
13/14** **Minutes of Various Bodies**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of various bodies.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings be received/approved, as appropriate:-

Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board – 16 January 2014
Safer Stockton Partnership – 28 January 2014
Tees Valley Unlimited – Leadership Board – 22 January 2014
Tees Valley Unlimited – Leadership Board – 17 February 2014

**CAB
14/14** **Shaping a Brighter Future**

Consideration was given to a report on the Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) programme.

The Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF) programme was being developed to build capacity and resilience and support succession planning in the workforce. The SBF programme outline was approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2014. The purpose of the report was to provide an update to Cabinet on the development of the programme.

The background and context for the SBF programme was set out in the 16 January 2014 Cabinet report.

However it was worth noting that the context for the programme set out in the January report had not changed. The Council still faced challenges relating to:-

- ▪ Serious financial pressures
- ▪ Huge growth in demand for services
- ▪ Fundamental changes due to welfare reforms
- ▪ 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.
- ▪ An ageing workforce and associated loss of extremely experienced and knowledgeable staff through retirement.
- ▪ Signs of increased stress and fatigue in the workforce as evidenced in the sickness absence statistics and from feedback from my regular service

briefings and meetings throughout the workplace

These challenges were however only part of the context and the Council also had to recognise:-

- ▪ Huge potential and talent in the organisation as evidenced by APSE awards, positive feedback from residents and businesses and a host of nationally recognised accreditations and awards across our services.
- ▪ A strong track record and culture of employee development.
- ▪ A dedicated, high performing and committed workforce who care about their work and enjoy being part of the Council.

The SBF programme that was being developed reflected these realities and accepted that the Council had a responsibility and duty to support and develop its employees through these challenging times.

The SBF programme was an essential element of the Council's ongoing commitment to long term planning and investment in the organisation and was arguably the most important invest-to-save project the Council had embarked on. It under-pinned the programme of transformation which the Council was undertaking which began with the first Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) reviews in 2009. The investment in the workforce would be critical to meeting future challenges and this programme was another example of how the long term and planned approach to development was serving the organisation well. The programme would be delivered over the next 5 years and whilst some benefits would be realised in the short term it was important to recognise that this was not a short term fix.

The SBF programme had been under development over the last 3 months and was still changing and developing as more employees engage with the process through discussions.

The principle of the programme remained unchanged from the original vision - that the Council would build more capacity in the organisation by investing in its own people and growing its own talent to increase capability through personal and team development.

As outlined in the January report, the Chief Executive had been leading the SBF development work in collaboration with an experienced specialist in organisational change – Mel Nixon. Mel who had worked for many years with NEREO and many Local Authorities was, due to his long term working relationship with the Chief Executive, providing his services free of charge to this project for the next 5 years. His commitment to SBC as an organisation reflects his belief in the potential of its people and his identification with the big plans for the Borough.

Both Mel and the Chief Executive had been delighted at the enthusiasm with which employees had engaged with SBF. Over the last three months they had talked with a wide range of employees through Setting the Standard sessions, work with the Youth Forum, individual meetings and team visits. They had been provided with creative, challenging and transformational ideas and suggestions and great enthusiasm from dedicated and committed employees. This development phase was still ongoing and the detailed programme was

continuing to evolve as they incorporate many of these ideas. However they were now at a stage where the plan was crystalising around 8 areas of work:-

- Defining the workforce and workplace culture
- Developing a more robust selection and recruitment process
- Establishing an improved approach to talent identification and 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 teams to ensure they are working to maximum effect
- Building stronger relationships with partner organisations
- Reviewing the structures in the organisation to ensure that we have the right people in right place
- Reviewing employees support package to ensure that we support and retain staff

More detail on the workstreams was attached to the report.

An approach to delivery of the programme had also be established. The development of the programme was being shaped by employees and it was equally important that it would be delivered by employees, supported, where necessary, by a small team of external specialists. Work would continue over the next few months to firm up this delivery model and to identify employees to dedicate time to the programme. However a model based around a small programme board, project team and resource network was attached to the report.

Some additional specialist resources needed to support the programme had been identified and a contract arrangement had been put in place to call in leadership development and training to complement the in-house delivery team.

Promising discussions had also taken place with partners in other organisations who were interested in working on this programme. Catalyst had expressed a commitment to working on the programme.

The LGA had requested more information about the programme and follow up discussions would be held to identify all available support. All available possibilities to identify match funding would be explored to further enhance the programme.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress in the development of the SBF programme and the programme plan in Appendix 1 be noted.
2. Cabinet receive regular progress reports on delivery of the programme.