

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 4th September, 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, B Brown, L King, T Montague (R); P Dobson, R McGuckin, R Poundford, R Kench, H MacGregor (DNS); J Humphreys, J Harvey, S McLurg (CESC); P Kelly (PH) D E Bond, M Waggott, J Trainer, G Birtle, P K Bell (LD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs Carol Clark (Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee), Cllr Nigel Cooke (Chair of the Environment Select Committee), Cllr Mick Stoker (Chair of the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee), Cllr Ken Lupton, Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr David Coleman.

CAB 56/14

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Review of Children, Education and Social Care Delivery Arrangements – Children’s Services as his wife was employed in Children’s Services. Councillor Beall did not vote on the item.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Economic Climate Update Report as he was a Director of Tristar Homes Board.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 15 – Armed Forces Annual Report 2014 as his son was a member of the armed forces.

Councillor Harrington declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 - Local Government Boundary Review Request as he was employed by Middlesbrough Council.

CAB 57/14

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2014 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CAB 58/14

Scrutiny Review of A Safer Place for Children

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Children & Young People Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of A Safer Place for Children policy guidelines. The Select Committee were asked to undertake an independent review of the policy guidelines.

A Safer Place for Children which had been developed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board in August 2012 and were subsequently adopted by Stockton Borough Council’s Cabinet. The guidelines were intended to support organisations responsible for public settings to create an appropriately safe environment for children.

RESOLVED that the existing A Safer Place for Children policy guidelines be endorsed.

**CAB
59/14** **Scrutiny Review of Tree Preservation Orders**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Environment Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Tree Preservation Orders.

The main issues and overall aim of this review was:-

- To consider the legislation and the division of responsibilities with regard to tree management within the Council
- To identify any issues arising from legislation or Council process

RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegation be amended to require the appropriate Head of Service to provide the final determination for Tree Preservation Orders following the consideration of the Principal Tree and Woodland Officer.

**CAB
60/14** **Scrutiny Review of Street Cafe Furniture and A-Boards**

Consideration was given to a report on a Scrutiny Review of Street Café Furniture and A-Boards.

The Committee, from a suggestion the Urban Environment Task Group, examined the issue of the location of advertising boards, street café furniture, and shop goods on the highway that would both support economic vitality without adversely impacting on pedestrians and other highway users.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Guidance documents be issued by Stockton Borough Council, following consultation, for street cafes, A-Boards and shop goods displays on the adopted highway across the borough.
2. The guidance be communicated to stakeholders and other interested parties thorough an effective communication strategy.
3. The implementation of the guidance be largely self-regulatory with a light touch enforcement intervention where appropriate.
4. The impact of the guidance be measured and, with input from businesses and disability groups, a report produced after six months from the date of adoption of the guidance.

5. The issue of the guidance relating to A-Boards, street cafes and shop goods does not replace any requirements for planning consent, street trading or Licensing approval.

CAB 61/14 LA nominations for Cabinet on 4 September 2014

Consideration was given to a report on LA Representatives on School Governing Bodies. 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 was invited to consider the nominations to school / academy Governing Bodies listed in the Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED that the following appointments be made to the vacant Governorships in line with agreed procedures subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure:-

Barley Fields Primary School - Dr T Christie (School Nomination)
Harewood Primary School - Mr R Jordinson (School Nomination)
High Clarence Primary School - Cllr R McCall (Lab) and Mrs M Owens (School Nomination)
Levendale Primary School - Cllr A Sherris (Con)
The Glebe Primary School - Mrs G Broome (School nomination)
Whitehouse Primary School - Mr A Rajput (School Nomination)

CAB 62/14 Review of Children, Education and Social Care Delivery Arrangements - Children's Services

Consideration was given to a report on the Review of Children, Education and Social Care Delivery Arrangements – Children’s Services.

The report highlighted some of the challenges in Children’s Services, and the need to review the Service delivery arrangements.

The delivery arrangements for Children’s Services had changed considerably since 2011, there had been a significant number of Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Reviews and Service Reviews as well over the last three years.

In 2011 there were Four Heads of Service who had Children’s Services responsibilities within their remit:-

Head of Business Support and Improvement
Head of Children and Young People’s Services
Head of Education, Early Years and Complex Needs
Head of Children and Young People’s Strategy

One of the above posts was jointly funded by Primary Care Trust (NHS), and one post’s remit spanned both Children’s and Adult Services.

As a result of the changes within the NHS in 2011, the joint post was no longer required. At the same time there was a significant reduction in the funding of the Early Intervention Grant, so a decision was taken to delete the post and allocate the responsibilities to the remaining three Heads of Service.

Since that time there had been significant increase in legislative changes and revised Government policy that had led to further and continued challenges and demands on Children's Services. These had included:-

- 0-25 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Reforms
- The changing focus on Schools/Academies and the Local Authority's role in that
- Ofsted Inspection Framework of Local Authority School Improvement, where Good is now the minimum expectation
- Revised Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care, where Good is now a minimum expectation across all Services
- Greater focus on LSCB Board with a separate Ofsted Judgement as part of the Inspection framework
- A greater focus on the Early Help Strategy and Offer and the need to evidence the effectiveness
- A greater focus on commissioning of Children's Services i.e. Children's Centres/ Youth Service, will continue

More recent developments had also contributed or would contribute to increased demand within the Service, including Health and Wellbeing Board and the newly revised partnership arrangements, the proposed development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) with Hartlepool and the Troubled Families work. Members were be aware the Head of Service post which previously had responsibility for Troubled Families had been deleted. The Government had announced a national Phase 2 of the programme for a further five years, until 2019/2020 and this work would be led by Children, Education and Social Care (CESC). The Service had also seen a significant increase in Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs).

There continued to be a significant impact on workloads as a result of Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services. There had, for example, been 22 Ofsted Inspections in Stockton between January – July 2014 across Schools, Children's Centres and Children's Homes.

The Local Authority would also receive a four week Inspection of Services for children in need of help, protection, looked after and care leavers, along with a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) sometime over the next two years and there was a real need to continue to focus on Inspection preparation and implementing the Improvement Plan following the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review earlier in the year.

Cabinet were aware Children's Social Care continued to have increased pressures on the budget relating to Looked After Children as they receive, on a quarterly basis, "Children's Social Care Activity and Performance" report. (The last report to Cabinet was 17 July 2014.) The two key areas of budgetary pressure being external placements and independent foster care provision and there was a need to undertake more focussed work around this area,

particularly relating to foster care provision now that the Joint Venture arrangements for residential provision are progressing.

The ability to commit more focussed time and capacity to look at some of the longer term strategic challenges to reduce the number of children who become Children in Need, Children Looked After and Children in Need of Child Protection Plan was however limited with the ongoing extensive operational demands on the two key Heads of Service.

The Corporate Director, in agreement with the Chief Executive and Lead Member, did bring in some additional capacity for six months in early 2014, to assist with Ofsted preparation, the revision of the Early Help Strategy, the development of the new HWB arrangements, and to undertake a piece of work around Fostering moving forward which was beneficial, and enabled the service to complete a number of key priority pieces of work, but additional capacity will be needed to progress any further work moving forward.

Over the last year in particular, there had been increased competing demands placed on the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, as along with the challenges in Children's Services, the introduction of the Care Act and the Better Care Fund, along with the increased focus on the quality of provision within Adults Services had meant she had needed to focus more of her time on Adult Services.

The Corporate Director was also expected to focus time on the Corporate work relating to the innovation and budgetary challenges in the organisation including Charing the Big Ticket Children's Social Care Programme Board and Adult Social Care Programme Board, as well as focussing on the services within her remit. She was also involved in both Regional and National meetings relating to her role as Director of Adult Social Services / Director of Children's Services.

The temporary increase in staffing capacity in Adult Services had assisted the Director in ensuring the key strategic priorities in Adult Services were being delivered, along with EIT Reviews, and ensured there was strong focus on operational services which was reflected in the recent LGA Review of Safeguarding. The Adult EIT Reviews had also made their target savings.

This additional capacity would need to be revisited in 2015 to assess whether the interim arrangements were required longer term on a permanent basis and whether there was a need to look at structural changes in Adults in light of the Care Act implications and the National/Government agenda regarding the integration of Health and Social Care Services.

There would be a need to consider the arrangements for receiving Adult referrals in light of the Care Act and the proposed MASH developments. This would need to take place over the coming months.

As part of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, the Annual Assurance Review would be requested of the Chief Executive regarding the Director of Children's Services undertaking more than one role.

The arrangements in place in Adult Services and the proposals to review Children's Services would be reflected in an update of the Assurance Review.

The Council had supported a long term, organisation wide, approach to succession planning, staff development and capacity growth – in the Shaping a Brighter Future Programme. Cabinet would receive a further update on this in November. Some of the early work in CESC was already highlighting some very pertinent facts:-

- None of the permanent Heads of Service in CESC wish to consider applying for the Corporate Director's role when she retires.
- There is a pressing need to consider future succession planning in Children's Services CESC, as part of the Shaping a Brighter Future (SBF). There was some resilience in Adult Services, but a review of Adult Services should be considered in 2015, in light of the Better Care Fund and Care Act implications.
- At least two of the current Heads of Service working in Children's Services had indicated they do not intend to work beyond 2016.
- A number of Third Tier Managers in Children's Social Care were considering other work options due to the demands of the role.
- There were also emerging challenges in relation to recruitment in Children's Services. Whilst the Council had always had challenges around recruiting experienced Children's Social Work staff and Team Managers, we were seeing emerging challenges relating to more specialist roles.
- Early work indicated there were some opportunities within Children's Services for succession planning, and these would be explored as part of the review of Children's Services and more broadly as part of the Shaping Brighter Futures Programme.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. Cabinet receive a further report from the Corporate Director with proposals.

CAB 63/14 Children and Families Act (Part 3) 2014 - Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Consideration was given to a report on the Children and Families Act (Part 3) 2014 - Children and Young People with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Children and Families Act received Royal Assent in March 2014. Part 3 of the Act introduced significant changes to the system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The changes would be introduced from 1st September 2014 and were generally referred to as 'SEN reform'.

The implementation of the legislation would require both cultural and organisational change. There was a clear emphasis on children, young people, and parents / carers participating as fully as possible in decisions about individual care and in decisions about local provision.

The key points of the legislation were:-

- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC plans) will replace statements of special educational needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) for children and young people aged 0-25
- There will be an option of a personal budget for children and young people with an EHC Plan
- There will be one category of special educational need for children and young people in education settings who do not have an EHC plan – this will be known as SEN Support
- The Local Authority will have to publish a Local Offer setting out information about services available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) must make joint commissioning arrangements for education, health and care provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

The report provided an overview of the requirements of the reform, work towards implementation of the legislation and the next steps.

With regard to the next steps the implementation of the legislation would be from September 2014. Guidance issued in July 2014 included a useful table about the phasing in of the reform and a copy of this was attached to the report.

From September 2014 the LA would implement the new process for EHC assessment and the writing of plans. This would run alongside the existing system of statements and LDAs until the transition process set out in paragraphs 24 to 28 was completed. The LA would also begin to deliver the transition plan for the transfer of statements and LDAs to EHC plans. This plan would be monitored as part of performance management arrangements.

From September 2014 the LA would also:-

- Establish an implementation group to oversee the implementation of the legislation, reporting to SGMT.
- Secure dispute resolution and mediation services
- Publish the initial version of the Local Offer however work will be ongoing to develop and review this.
- Undertake further work to develop personal budgets and what may be included in these in Stockton.
- Deliver further training for LA officers, partners and education providers.
- Deliver further communication with a further 3 newsletters planned for the next academic year.
- Continue to work with health partners on the development of joint commissioning.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The work carried out in preparation for the implementation of the SEN reform legislation be noted.
2. The planned next steps for work on the reform be noted.

**CAB
64/14** **Tees Achieve Ofsted Report and Future Plans**

Consideration was given to a report that summarised the findings of the Ofsted inspection of Tees Achieve, which was the Stockton Borough Council Service that delivered learning and skills, and also provided an indication of plans for the future direction of travel for Tees Achieve.

Stockton Borough Council Service Tees Achieve provided a range of learning and skills opportunities including apprenticeships, traineeships and study programmes for young people, classroom based learning for adults aged 19+ and community learning. Courses offered included accredited programmes, leading to improved employability prospects and part-time non-accredited courses which had a positive impact on personal and social development as well as potential enterprise opportunities for some learners.

Tees Achieve were previously inspected in May 2012 and were graded 3 (Satisfactory) overall. Following the introduction of a revised Ofsted Common Inspection Framework in September 2012 the satisfactory outcome was removed and grade 3 was now 'in need of improvement'. All satisfactory providers were scheduled for a further inspection during the 2013/14 academic year.

Tees Achieve were most recently inspected by Ofsted in June 2014. The inspection covered three broad categories:-

- Outcomes for learners – graded 2 (Good)
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – graded 2 (Good)
- Effectiveness of leadership and management – grade 2 (Good)

The grades combined give the overall effectiveness score, which was also graded 2 (Good). The sub-grades for the areas inspected (Apprenticeships, Employability, Study Programmes and ICT) were all graded 2 (Good), with Community Learning graded 1 (Outstanding).

The summary of findings which led to the 'good' classification is as follows:-

- A good proportion of learners progress to employment
- Significant improvements in personal, social and economic well-being for learners
- Good teaching, learning and assessment
- Exceptionally good additional learning support for individual learners
- Strong focus on improvement and staff development since the last inspection
- Good partnership working

The report highlighted the following areas that Tees Achieve need to do to

improve further and achieve 'outstanding' classification:-

- Improve outcomes for learners on longer courses, including success rates for apprentices within the planned time
- Increase the proportion of lessons that are outstanding
- Recruit more learners from communities with higher levels of deprivation and encourage them to progress to higher-level and accredited courses.

The full Ofsted report was attached to the report and could also be found on the Ofsted website.

Following the inspection, officers were reviewing the focus of the organisation to reflect the skills gaps, barriers to work and the need for progression.

Whilst reviewing the service strengths and future delivery, officers would also take the opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of the branding to ensure it represented the service that was delivered, and was clearly associated as a SBC service.

Tees Achieve would capitalise on its strength in community learning to engage with more learners from the more disadvantaged areas of the Borough who would not otherwise attend a college. Closer working with Stockton Riverside College, who were also graded 2 (Good) by Ofsted in 2014, had been developed to secure clear progression routes for learners when they were ready to move on.

To improve outcomes for learners on long courses, including apprenticeships, systems to closely monitor the progress of learners had been introduced. Actions to rectify slow progress or early leavers were implemented in a timely fashion.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment was closely monitored with all teaching staff observed at least once a year with timely re-observations where grades were less than 'good'. A more robust observation process introduced in 2013/14 led to an initial drop in the grade profile but this had improved to more than 80% of grades being good or better. The system had led to better identification of training needs. The focus for 2014/15 was to support tutors who were graded 'good' to become 'outstanding'.

Tees Achieve had segregated its learners into two main markets. For many learners, engaging in community learning promotes their physical and mental well-being and this was their primary aim for attendance. For many other learners, they engaged in learning to eventually hope to become economically active by learning skills and competencies that may empower them to enter the jobs market or start a small business.

Maths, English and IT would form the foundation stones of the core curriculum. Courses to build skills and develop social well-being would meet the requirements of the two target markets.

Tees Achieve would continue to offer employability courses. In 2012-2013 36% of learners entered employment following employability training. From September 2014 employability learners would be offered enterprise training to

awaken them to the idea of enterprise, to assess their skills and attributes and to signpost to specialist provision if learners decide to take a step towards starting a business.

Using information from the Local Economic Assessment, and where Labour Market Information indicated a need, Tees Achieve would respond or consider commissioning to other approved providers who had the skills or specialist facilities to deliver. Providers with links to employers would be sought to improve progression routes into employment, particularly for 16-18 apprenticeships and 16-18 traineeships where there were growth opportunities and were open to funding increases. Tees Achieve would follow formal procurement procedures to commission delivery.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The successful outcome of the June 2014 Tees Achieve Ofsted Inspection in securing Grade 2 (Good) overall with Grade 1 (Outstanding) for Community Learning be noted.
2. The plans, set out in paragraphs 7 - 15 for the future direction of travel for Tees Achieve be endorsed.

**CAB
65/14**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Consideration was given to a report on The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

The report updated Members regarding the new requirements relating to (1) the public reporting and commentating on public meetings of local government bodies, and (2) the written records to be kept of certain decisions taken by officers of those bodies.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ("the Regulations") came into force on the 6 August 2014.

The Regulations were concerned with two main issues:-

- (i) Allowing the public to report and commentate on public meetings of local government bodies (which includes principal councils like Stockton, and Town/Parish Councils); and
- (ii) Requiring written records to be kept of certain decisions taken by officers of such bodies.

The Regulations required persons attending meetings of Councils (meaning a meeting of the (full) Council, the executive (Cabinet), or of a committee or sub-committee, such as a Planning or Licensing Committee), to be permitted to report on those meetings.

"Reporting" meant:-

- Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of proceedings at a

meeting.

- Using any other means of enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at the meeting as it takes place or later, or
- Reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at the meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

Oral reporting or oral commentary on a meeting as it took place, if the person reporting or providing the commentary was present at the meeting, did not have to be permitted.

Reasonable facilities must, so far as practicable, be afforded to persons attending a meeting for the purpose of reporting on the meeting.

Any communication method could be used by the person reporting on the meeting, including the internet, to publicise, post or otherwise share the results of the person's reporting activities.

Publication and dissemination of the results could take place at the time of the meeting or after the meeting.

Where the public were excluded from a meeting, they could be prevented from reporting on the meeting employing methods which could be used without the person's presence at the meeting, and which enabled persons not present to see or hear the proceedings as they take place or later.

The Regulations also required Officers making certain delegated decisions, to produce a written record of those decisions.

The decisions concerned, were ones which would otherwise have been taken by the (full) Council itself, a committee or a sub-committee, but which had been delegated to an Officer either:-

- Under a specific, express authorisation; or
- Under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and, the effect of the decision is to:-
 - (i) Grant a permission or licence;
 - (ii) Affect the rights of an individual; or
 - (iii) Award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects the Council's financial position.

The written record must be produced as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision had been made, and must contain the following:-

- (a) the date the decision was taken;
- (b) a record of the decision and the reasons for it;
- (c) details of (any) alternative options considered and rejected; and
- (d) where the decision is made under a specific express authorisation, the names of any Members who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision.

The written record, together with any related background papers, must as soon as reasonably practicable after the record was made, be made available for public inspection by the public:-

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of the Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) by such other means considered appropriate by the Council

Copies of written records and background papers must be provided on request, and after payment of any charge.

The requirements regarding written records excluded confidential and/or exempt information.

It was an offence for anyone who had custody of a written record and/or background paper, without reasonable excuse, to intentionally obstruct anyone exercising a right to inspect or to refuse to provide copies of the same.

The Government had provided a Plain English Guide for the public and practitioners regarding the Regulations. A copy was available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-and-accountable-local-government>. This advised Councils to adopt a policy on filming of Members of the public. This also suggested the need for a general policy or protocol for the benefit of members, officers and those wishing to exercise their rights under the Regulations.

A working draft protocol had been in use since the Regulations came into force. A copy of the proposed protocol for Cabinet's approval was attached to the report.

A copy of the Protocol was also being submitted to Council for its approval in relation to full Council meetings and meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees.

Appropriate advice and guidance had been prepared for all Services regarding the decision recording and public inspection requirements detailed in the Regulations.

A similar approach to that adopted in relation to the Local Authorities' (Executive Arrangements) Meetings and Access to Information (England) Regulations 2012 (regarding meetings and decisions of Cabinet and decisions of Officers using executive powers) had been adopted.

At its meeting on 13 March 2014 Cabinet asked the Members' Advisory Panel to consider issues relating to the possible recording and web-broadcasting by the Council of its own meetings, and to report the findings to a future Cabinet meeting.

A report was being prepared in this respect for a Panel meeting (on the 5 September 2014).

The Panel's findings would be reported back to the next Cabinet in due course.

The Council's Constitution would need to be reviewed and revised, where necessary and/or appropriate, to reflect the Regulations, particularly individuals' rights to report on Council meetings and the requirements to provide written records of certain Officer-decisions, as well as providing details of the approved protocol.

RESOLVED that the protocol for use in relation to future public meetings of Cabinet be approved.

**CAB
66/14** **ECONOMIC CLIMATE UPDATE REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report that 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.

Following the recession in 2008 Stockton Council's ambition remained the same; to create a borough that was more confident, vibrant and successful than ever before; where business and people prosper and grow. To do this the nature and extent of opportunities and challenges must be understood that exist within Stockton's economy.

The monthly update report would enable a focused 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 and support the work being undertaken be noted.

**CAB
67/14** **Medium Term Financial Plan Update - June 2014**

Consideration was given to a report that updated Members on the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2014.

Members were provided with a summary of each service area MTFP position and the outturn position for each Big Ticket area was detailed within the report.

With regard to Central Government Consultations a Finance Technical Consultation was announced in July 2014, with a response date of 25 September. The documents were under review with regard to their potential impact on Stockton. One element of the proposal related to the issue of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Scheme. Up until the end of 2013/14 the Council were required to participate due to the carbon emissions meeting the relevant threshold. This costs the Council approximately £100,000 (excluding schools). From 2014/15, Stockton would no longer meet the criteria and

therefore dropped out of this Scheme and this should save the Council £100,000 per year. The proposal in the consultation however, was that those organisations who had dropped out of the Scheme would effectively have funding reduced to offset these savings, negating any benefit of being removed from the Scheme. This would be highlighted in the Council's response to the consultation.

The Department for Education had announced their response to their earlier consultation on the Education Services Grant. The Department would reduce the value of the grant by approximately 25% from 2015/16. This would compound the loss of grant caused by reductions due to academy transfers. A sum of £900,000 was previously identified in the MTFP to address the impact of academy conversions, but there would be a further loss of grant from 2015/16. Services funded from the Education Services Grant were being reviewed in the context of the reduction in grant funding.

Recent announcements with regard to the Better Care Fund and Care Act may have a financial impact. The Council was initially informed that Stockton would receive funding of £1.0m in 2015/16 for implementation of the Care Act. The latest announcements suggested that this figure may be reduced. The Council also still awaited notification of how the ongoing additional cost would be funded. These issues would be assessed in detail as more information becomes available.

The LGA and CIPFA launched an Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in February 2014. The Council prepared a response to a call for evidence from the Commission and a copy was attached to the report. The Council also supported ANEC in developing a response and the draft ANEC response was attached to the report. SIGOMA had also drafted a response and this was attached to the report for information.

The updated capital programme was summarised within the report and further detail attached to the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), Capital Programme and current level of General Fund balances be noted.
2. The Council's response to the LGA/CIPFA Call for Evidence on Local Government Finance and the draft responses from ANEC and SIGOMA be noted.
3. Copies of the final responses be issued to all Council Members and to local Members of Parliament.

CAB **APSE Awards 2014**
68/14

Consideration was given to a report on the APSE Awards 2014. APSE (The Association for Public Service Excellence) would announce the winners of its Annual Service Awards for local authorities and their public sector partners later

in September 2014. These were among the most prestigious awards schemes available to local authorities in the UK, providing the opportunity to showcase excellence across a wide range of functions.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had supported these awards for most of the 15 years of their existence, and had been successful in several individual categories over the years, culminating in being named Overall Council of the Year in 2010.

In April 2014, Stockton submitted applications for eleven award categories, and had been advised that it had been successfully shortlisted for eight separate categories and was one of only ten local authorities shortlisted for the Overall Council of the Year in the APSE Awards 2014.

RESOLVED that the continued success of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council being identified as an excellent Council through the shortlisting for eight separate categories and the Overall Council of the Year in the APSE Awards 2014 be noted.

**CAB
69/14** **Armed Forces**

Consideration was given to a report presented the second Annual Armed Forces Report to Council. It summarised the work to date with the Armed Forces and the progress so far on the implementation of Stockton's Armed Forces Community Covenant. It also outlined proposed projects for the coming year and included a statement from the Commanding Officer of 102 Battalion REME.

The report provided an overview of all measures taken to date to support the armed forces community through the Community Covenant in Stockton-on-Tees.

The Community Covenant acted as a catalyst to consolidate the work stakeholders were undertaking and set it within a policy framework. Last years' Annual Report identified the changes to policies and practice these were summarised and updated within the report.

The work undertaken as part of the Community Covenant acted as a reminder about some of the services that were already in existence e.g. Middlesbrough CAB provided a dedicated Money and Benefits advice service for veterans funded by the Royal British Legion (RBL) and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF). This was intended for people across Teesside (including Stockton). Workers undertook home visits or outreach appointments to SDAIS if necessary.

With regard to the next steps there had been achievements across each of the pillars of the Community Covenant but there was still some way to go. In the coming year work would be undertaken on the following priorities:-

- Develop Information and Intelligence sharing protocols in line with the findings from the regional Forces in Mind research
- Updating of the JSNA

- Further investigation of the needs of the Armed Forces Community including specialist Ex-Service personnel housing units across the Tees Valley, this work forms part of the Community Covenant Bid.
- Improving the Directories and signposting as a result of the work through the Community Covenant Bid.
- Investigate ways in which we can work with the Bishop of Durham and the Diocese to further enhance our Community Covenant

RECOMMENDED to Council that the progress report be noted and the on-going work to implement the actions be supported.

**CAB
70/14**

Local Government Boundary Review Request

Consideration was given to a report on a Local Government Boundary Review Request. A request had been received from Yarm Town Council (YTC) for Stockton Borough Council to invite the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to carry out a principal area boundary review in light of the recent parish poll.

A parish poll could be called for at a parish meeting, which was a meeting of the local government electors for a parish. The Chairman of the parish council for the parish, was entitled to attend a parish meeting and to preside as Chair.

The poll was a poll of the local government electors of the parish and if requested, the Chairman of the parish meeting must provide the Borough Council's Returning Officer with the necessary details to allow a notice of poll to be given and for the poll to be held.

The parish council was responsible for the costs of the poll.

The Borough Council had no other role or responsibility in relation to a parish poll, which was not legally binding on the Borough Council or the parish Council.

At the Yarm Parish Assembly meeting held on 22 April 2014, a parish poll was requested in relation to the following question:-

“Do the electors of Yarm wish to be removed from the control and administration of Stockton Borough Council and become the responsibility of North Yorkshire County Council and Hambleton District Council?”

A parish poll was subsequently held on 27 May 2014. The result of the poll was as follows:-

Answering Yes to the (above) question	1465 votes
Answering No to the question	177 votes
Rejected votes	2

The total number of ballot papers issued was 1644, with an electorate of 6745, and a turnout of 24.37%.

Attached to the report was a summary explanatory note regarding principal area boundary reviews. This was based on technical guidance produced by the

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (Electoral Equality/Convenient and Effective Local Government).

The following points were of particular importance:-

The LGBCE believed that local authorities should be the primary instigators of a principal area boundary review and that they would only normally undertake such a review where there was agreement between all the principal councils potentially directly affected (in this instance, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Hambleton District Council and North Yorkshire County Council).

The LGBCE would need to be satisfied that any proposed change meets their statutory and other criteria. In particular specific evidence would be required to demonstrate that the proposal would satisfy the need to secure effective and convenient local government; and the need to reflect identities and interests of local communities.

In addition, the LGBCE would expect to see evidence of confidence that the change would maintain or improve and sustain value for money in the effectiveness of local government.

The principal councils concerned would be expected to satisfy themselves and their council tax payers that the financial consequences of the proposal were acceptable, leading to the sustained viability of councils' service provision.

The driver for the change was the outcome of the parish poll in response to the question specified at paragraph 2.1 of the report. There had been no evidence of any assessment of a case being made by the campaigners set against the criteria outlined, which would be expected prior to any invitation being made to the LGBCE.

Since the parish poll there had been communication with a GP Practice in Yarm expressing concern over the potential implications on access to health services for residents, should such boundary changes take place. There were potential significant implications across a range of public services e.g. fire, police, public health as well as Local Authority services where provision would differ significantly i.e. SBC had prioritised weekly refuse collections to name but a few. There were also implications for services provided by the Council which would suffer from diseconomies of scale and would have to be reconfigured.

Any assessment and impact analysis that was undertaken would need to be thorough and detailed across all public services. Indeed it would also need to cover economic growth given the boundaries and architecture of Local Enterprise Partnerships and of future European funding programmes which would also be impacted.

There was no provision in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for this work, nor was it identified within the Council's agreed Council Plan.

Such work would be time consuming and resource intensive requiring a budget of a minimum of £100,000 to fund either additional temporary staff, or consultants to carry out the detailed assessment and impact analysis and a subsequent borough wide consultation.

RECOMMENDED to Council that this Council does not invite the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out a principal area boundary review nor will it carry out any further action or work on this proposal.