

## Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Wednesday, 12th July, 2017.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook(Chair), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Michael Smith and Cllr Norma Wilburn.

**Officers:** Neil Schneider (CE), Beccy Brown, Ged Morton (HR&L), Garry Cummings, Ian Miles (F&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Richard McGuckin (EG&D), Ann Workman (A&H), Gary Woods, Peter Bell (DCE) .

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Derrick Brown (Chair of Place Select Committee), Cllr Sonia Bailey (Vice Chair of Place Select Committee), Cllr Barry Woodhouse, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Carol Clark, Ian Wardle (Thirteen Group).

**Apologies:** None.

### **CAB 31/17** Welcome and Evacuation Procedure

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

### **CAB 32/17** Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Place Select Committee - Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings (Task & Finish) as he was a Director of Thirteen. Councillor Steve Nelson withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Welfare Reform Update Q4 as he was a Director of Thirteen.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Welfare Reform Update Q4 as he was a Board Member of Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Welfare Reform Update Q4 as he was a Board Member of Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Welfare Reform Update Q4 as she was a Member of SDAIS.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Council Plan Annual Report 201617 as he was a Director of Thirteen.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Xentrall Annual Report 201617 as he was a Member of NEPO.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Medium Term Financial Plan Outturn - March 2017 as he was a Director of Thirteen.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Minutes of Various Bodies as he was an employee of TEWV.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Minutes of Various Bodies as she was a Governor of TEWV.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Minutes of Various Bodies as he was a Member of TVCA.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Billingham Event Infrastructure and Billingham International Folk Festival as he was the Chair of BIFF. Councillor Bob Cook withdrew from the Chair and the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item. Councillor Jim Beall was in the Chair during consideration of the item.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 14 - Strengthening our joint working/developing a joint investment plan (Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and Thirteen) as he was a Director of Thirteen. Councillor Steve Nelson withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 15 - Economic Climate Report - Economic Performance & Growth Annual Round Up as he was a Director of Thirteen.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 16 - Disabled Facilities Grant: proposal to introduce discretionary financial assistance scheme as he was a Director of Thirteen.

**CAB  
33/17**      **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**CAB  
34/17**      **Place Select Committee - Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings (Task & Finish)**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's Task and Finish Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings.

On the 14th June 2017, a major fire broke out at Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey 220-foot (70-metre) high tower block of public housing flats in North Kensington, west London, resulting in a high number of casualties and severe damage to the building. The cause of the fire was suspected to be a faulty fridge-freezer in a fourth floor flat, and the speed at which the fire spread was believed to have been aided by the buildings recently added exterior cladding (part of a 2016 refurbishment).

The scale of this tragedy had led the Department for Communities and Local

Government (DCLG) to request that fire safety checks be urgently carried out on all tower blocks, and for Local Authorities and Housing Associations to ensure that appropriate safety and response measures were in place. Crucially, there was an immediate need to provide residents within such buildings with the appropriate reassurances.

The aim of this urgent task and finish review was to:

- Establish the residential buildings in question, and identify any areas of concern in terms of fire risk, particularly around the type of cladding used on Grenfell Tower.
- Review if robust fire risk assessments have been/are in place, and understand what these assessments entail.
- Consider the safety advice given to residents who live in tower blocks.
- Provide reassurance to residents, Ward Councillors and the DCLG.

In order to inform the review, evidence had been taken from key partner agencies, including:

- Local Authority
- Thirteen Group
- Cleveland Fire Brigade
- Kennedy Gardens Residents Association

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Committee receives further updates from key partner agencies around the stated ongoing investigations of high rise residential buildings across the Borough.
2. The Government is strongly lobbied to improve and strengthen building control mechanisms in relation to fire safety.
3. All key partner agencies consider the outcomes from Thirteen Group's commissioned independent inquiry around the presence of Class 3 combustible cladding at Kennedy Gardens, and act where necessary.
4. Landlords ensure the maintenance and upkeep of fire risk assessments, including that the building itself meets fire risk assessment standards, and that the responsibility of tenants in maintaining robust fire safety measures and timely reporting of any areas of concern to their landlord is reinforced.
5. The Committee recommends the installation of sprinkler/misting systems in all high rise residential buildings across Stockton-on-Tees.
6. The Council writes to all landlords of high rise residential buildings in Stockton-on-Tees to ensure compliance with fire regulations, which takes into account vulnerable occupants, information on which is regularly updated.
7. Consideration be given by all key partner agencies on the outcomes from the Government's public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower, or any related, fire once available.

## **Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Report 2017**

Consideration was given to a report on Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG).

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had a strong track record and had demonstrated significant performance in reducing net emissions of greenhouse gases since 2009, and was ranked 5th in the country under the Local Authority Energy Index. The Council was required to submit a Greenhouse Gas Emissions report detailing all direct and indirect emissions from Council activity to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in July each year, under a Memorandum of Understanding between BEIS and the Local Government Association (LGA).

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions report was attached and highlighted that in 2016/17 the Council had performed extremely well once more, reducing the net emissions by 20.1% since 2014/15 against a challenging target of 10.1%, to a total of 21,127 tonnes per annum. Since 2012/13 the Council had reduced the emissions from sources that were owned or controlled directly by the Council by 45%, and this was the second year in succession that all seven areas of emissions activity had shown a decrease in a 12 month period.

Subsequently the Council had also made significant financial savings as a result, with combined financial savings / cost of avoidance of £399,095 in the last financial year. As projects such as the LED street lighting replacement programme continued to be implemented, and the adopted Climate Change Strategy was being delivered, it was anticipated that the Council would achieve the challenging target of a 21% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Council activity by March 2020.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The positive performance in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases from Council activity in 2016/17, and associated financial savings be noted.
2. The continued efforts to reduce emissions via a range of activities be supported.

## **Welfare Reform Update Q4**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the monitoring of outcomes and impacts of welfare reform and a summary of actions undertaken by the Council to mitigate against circumstances arising from the implementation of these changes.

Regular reports on welfare reform had been provided to Cabinet for several years, providing information on a range of indicators which showed how these changes were impacting on residents and service provision across the borough. These reports had also included detail on any updates the Council had received with regard to the further roll-out of welfare reform and interventions the Council was making to manage its impact on residents.

As part of the existing monitoring arrangements, trends had been identified and monitored such as heightened activity around benefit sanctions, increases in the

use of local food banks and shifts in the rented housing sector from social to private landlords.

A basket of monitoring indicators had been developed and was attached to the report.

The monitoring framework was set out under the following issues:

- Advice and Information Services;
- Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Social Fund/Crisis Payments;
- Housing;
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme;
- Employment; and
- General/cross cutting.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The performance monitoring outcomes and observations provided be noted.
3. An additional class of local discretionary Council Tax discount of up to 100% for care leavers up to 25 years of age under Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 be approved, and some minor changes be made to the existing scheme (at paragraphs 20 – 30 of the report).

**CAB  
37/17      The Council Plan Annual Report 2016-17**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council Plan Annual Report.

The annual report provided an update on the non-financial performance of the Council during 2016/17.

Although the Council continued to face huge ongoing financial and economic challenges, it remained very ambitious for Stockton-on-Tees and 2016/17 had seen the Council continue to deliver for residents and businesses. The scale of the challenge was unprecedented and left the Council facing more incredibly difficult decisions.

The Council was committed to developing and ensuring it delivered high quality, customer focused services that met the changing needs of the communities. In 2016/17 the Council had continued to develop as an organisation and had:

- Been shortlisted in two prestigious national awards as one of only six finalists in the “Local Authority of the Year” category of the Municipal Journal awards and for the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) overall Council of the Year Award for the seventh year running.
- Continued the programme of service reviews as the Council adapted to huge ongoing funding reductions.
- Received another extremely positive report from Auditors, who said: “As we have seen in recent years, the Council is exploring different service models

to preserve service delivery along with financial stability.”

- Received extremely positive results from the employee survey which should be celebrated, particularly when they were read in the context of significant change and work pressures for employees.
- Maintained the Silver Investor in People award and also achieved the Gold Better Health at Work award accreditation.
- Maintained the Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the sixth consecutive year, securing the highest possible “compliance +” rating in 9 categories
- Continued to implement improvements in direct response to the Ipsos MORI residents’ survey undertaken across the Borough in 2015.
- Launched the new “My Views” consultation portal, which provided an improved online platform to support consultations on service changes and proposals.
- Supported the successful bid that saw Stockton High Street crowned winner of the Great British High Street Awards’ Rising Star category.

The full Council Plan Annual Report was attached for Members information.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB  
38/17**     **Xentrall Annual Report 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report on the Xentrall Annual Report 2016/17.

The annual report reviewed the progress and performance of Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership, which was established in May 2008 and was in its tenth year of the original ten year agreement.

The Xentrall services were:

- ICT (strategy and operations)
- Transactional HR (payroll, recruitment, sickness absence)
- Transactional Finance (creditors, debtors, banking, schools finance)
- Design & Print (professional buyer, in-house design and print)

The original business case identified a number of efficiencies and benefits to be delivered resulting in initial savings of £7.4m over the original ten year period. The successful partnership had delivered all of these plus additional efficiencies and benefits and was on target to make £13.6m savings over the same ten year period. At the same time the quality and performance of services had improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing over the same period.

In recognition of the success, Members were reminded that they had previously agreed to amend the original ten year period into an on-going rolling agreement.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB  
39/17**     **Medium Term Financial Plan Outturn - March 2017**

Consideration was given to a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan Outturn - March 2017.

The report focused on the financial performance and position at the end of the 2016/17 financial year and updated the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as at 31 March 2017.

A table within the report set out the final financial position for each Directorate as at 31 March 2017. The reasons for any significant movements were summarised within the report.

Previous reports to Cabinet summarised the position regarding the remaining balance of managed surplus funds. This had been updated to reflect the position at year end and was shown within the report.

The Capital budget for 2012/20 was attached to the report and summarised in a table within the report.

Members noted that the programme had been updated to reflect the approvals contained within the 2017/18 Budget Report and to reflect changes to the programme resulting from the sourcing of external funding. The changes were attached to the report. The Programme had also been updated to reflect schemes which had completed in 2016/17.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The MTFP and the current level of General Fund balances be noted.
2. The position regarding the Virgin Media appeal relating to National Non Domestic Rates be noted.
3. The allocation of £3,640,877 from the Improved Better Care Fund be noted.
4. The revised Capital Programme attached at Appendix A be noted.

**CAB 40/17 Minutes of Various Bodies**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution or previous practice the minutes of the meeting of the bodies indicated below were submitted for consideration:-

SLSCB – 11 May 2017  
SSP – 4 April 2017  
TSAB – 26 April 2017  
TVCA – 22 March 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings detailed in the appendices be approved / received, as appropriate.

**CAB 41/17 Billingham Event Infrastructure and Billingham International Folk Festival**

Consideration was given to a report that highlighted the challenges faced in the staging of the Billingham International Folk Festival (BIFF) that arise from changing legislation and best practice. The report also outlined the impacts on BIFF that were likely to arise from the changing use of the former Campus School sports block and set out possible courses of action.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The use of up to £25,000 of Council resources be approved to enable the short term measures to facilitate BIFF this year.
2. The proposed further work be endorsed to explore and define costs for longer term solutions to the infrastructure challenges faced by BIFF and similar events in Billingham and that this subject be recommended to be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme with the scope of the work to be undertaken by Scrutiny recommended by Director of Culture Event & Leisure in conjunction with the Arts Culture & Leisure portfolio holder.

**CAB  
42/17**

### **Stockton-On-Tees Local Economic Assessment**

Consideration was given to a report that provided Members with the refreshed Stockton-on-Tees' Local Economic Assessment 2017 (draft) for consideration.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council recognised the importance of developing a critical economic evidence base both for the Council and key partners. It was therefore appropriate to continue to produce a Local Economic Assessment (LEA), despite the fact that it no longer formed part of a statutory duty.

The position was further strengthened by the production of the Economic Strategy (2017 2032) that set out the Council's long term vision and ambitions in relation to economic growth. It was imperative that the Strategy and the associated Economic Growth Plan were underpinned by a robust evidence base.

The LEA would be updated every 3 years to ensure that any movement in the economic performance in the Borough could be reflected in priorities and delivery activities in updates to the Economic Growth Plan.

The LEA also had wider benefits than the Economic Strategy and Growth Plan as it contained information and intelligence that had and would continue to be vital to other areas of the Council for a variety of uses. For this reason, the development of this document had drawn on expertise from across the Council with sub-groups developed for each theme ('Business', 'Place' and 'People') with relevant representation. All of which had been overseen by a Steering Group consisting of senior officers, again, from across the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the report and draft Stockton-on-Tees' Local Economic Assessment be noted.
2. Final approval of the Local Economic Assessment be delegated to the Director of Economic Growth and Development, and the lead Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing.

**CAB  
43/17**

### **Strengthening our joint working/developing a joint investment plan (Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and Thirteen)**



Consideration was given to a report on Strengthening the joint working/developing a joint investment plan (Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and Thirteen).

The Council had completed a large scale stock transfer to Tristar Homes Limited in December 2010 which facilitated a multi-million pound investment programme of upgrading existing stock, funding environmental improvements and the delivery of much needed new affordable homes in the borough.

Recently Tristar Homes had with the support of the Council, been dissolved and consolidated within 'Thirteen' (the single landlord). Consolidation would enable Thirteen to deliver an internal efficiency programme and as importantly would give greater flexibility for the single landlord to lever in additional financial resources to support future investment programmes across the Tees Valley. Thirteen remained committed to working in collaboration with the Council and want to be the 'partner of choice'.

The report provided an overview of Thirteen's recent investment into the borough, highlighted Thirteens future investment commitments which were significant in terms of value and impact and detailed the work being undertaken with the Council to align the collective investment priorities to maximise impact through the development of a Joint Investment Plan.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Thirteens continued commitment to long-term investment in the Borough as detailed in paragraph 6 be noted.
2. The scrutiny work programme includes a review of Thirteen (following consolidation into a single landlord). This scrutiny review will be undertaken by Place Select Committee during 2018.
3. The development of a Joint Investment Plan be supported.
4. In 2012 (29.11.12 Cabinet) members approved the allocation of £910k grant funding to the Fabrick Housing Group to support the redevelopment of the former Housing Market Renewal Parkfield / Mill Lane site in central Stockton (now known as West End Gardens). The grant funding was specifically awarded to support the delivery of affordable housing on the site. As Thirteen had indicated this resource was no longer required, the re-direction of these monies be supported (up to a maximum of £910k) to support alternative projects which would deliver much needed affordable housing in the Borough. Pending this approval, delegated authority be given to commit the £910k to the Director of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Housing.

**CAB  
44/17 Economic Climate Report  
Economic Performance & Growth Annual Round Up**

Consideration was given to a report on Economic Climate Report - Economic Performance & Growth Annual Round Up.

The report provided a summary of headline economic indicators, strategic businesses announcements and strategic economic updates from across the Borough.

In addition to Members' receiving the quarterly thematic Economic Climate reports this Annual Round-Up report provided the headline economic performance information for the themes of 'Business', 'Place', and 'People' combined.

The Economic Strategy 2017-2032 that sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's long term vision and ambitions in relation to economic growth was approved by Members on 9th February 2017.

The Economic Strategy contained seven key growth indicators to monitor and benchmark Stockton-on-Tees against other geographies. As there had yet to be a full 12 month cycle of delivery to assess any changes to Stockton-on-Tees' economic position in relation those indicators - Output, Productivity, Jobs, Enterprise, Employment, Level 4 Qualifications, Housing Stock – this was not expected to be reported until mid-2018. However, the most recent position of some of the indicators was included in the Economic Dashboard within the report.

An attachment to the report presented:

- i. Economic Dashboard – key indicators that were monitored at least quarterly
- ii. Key announcements and developments
  - strategic updates – announcements with implications across key sectors and the region
  - business announcements – announcements from some of the key businesses within our Borough
  - strategic locations – a brief update on any new development at strategic business locations across the Borough
  - training & skills – provided an update on emerging news relating to skills needs and provision

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The report be considered in parallel the findings from the refreshed Stockton on Tees Local Economic Assessment 2017.

**CAB 45/17 Disabled Facilities Grant : proposal to introduce discretionary financial assistance schemes**

Local Authorities had been under a statutory duty to provide help for major adaptations to disabled people's homes since 1990 and this was usually done through the provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A DFG was intended to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and round their homes, as well as providing essential facilities which aimed to increase independence, prevent falls, facilitate hospital discharge and/or delay care

home admission.

Local Authority DFG funding allocations were 'ring-fenced' within the Better Care Fund and, as such, authorities were expected to consider how the provision of major adaptations could support broader health and social care agendas. This coupled with recent increases in Government funding, had enabled the Housing / Adult Social Care Teams to reflect on what services were provided, to whom, identify any gaps in provision and what opportunities were available to ensure adaptations effectively supported the Councils wider prevention and independence agendas. The report provided an overview of the major adaptations service provided by the Council and sought support to introduce a number of policy changes as detailed in paragraphs 8 – 14 of the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposed amendments to the Council's existing Equipment Loan Scheme Policy – as detailed in paragraphs 8 – 11 of the report be approved.
2. The introduction of a Homeowner DFG Top-Up Loan and a Homeowner DFG Loan - as detailed in paragraphs 12 – 13 of the report be approved.
3. The introduction of a Tenant DFG Loan - as detailed in paragraphs 14 – 16 of the report be approved.
4. Delegated authority be given to revise the Council's Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy (as detailed in paragraphs 5-6 of the report) and the existing Disabled Facilities Grant and Equipment Loan policies to the Director of Economic Growth and Development Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and Housing.
5. The move away from agency fees being charged on individual DFG applications to an annual 'top-slice' of the Councils allocated DFG funding detailed in paragraphs 18-20 of the report be approved.
6. Following an annual review of all statutory and discretionary adaptations schemes and confirmation of the Councils annual DFG funding allocation, delegate authority be given to make any necessary changes to all discretionary adaptations schemes (including withdrawal) and the Housing Renewal Financial Assistance, Disabled Facilities and Equipment Loan policies to the Director of Economic Growth and Development and Director of Adults and Health in consultation with the Cabinet members for Regeneration and Housing and Adult Services and Health.
7. Consideration be given to an amendment be made to the housing renewal assistance policy to allow the introduction of financial assistance for vulnerable homeowners, tenants or landlords who do not have the financial means available meet the basic statutory requirements for fire safety measures. And for Cabinet to delegate approval to the Director of EDGS in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health to make the necessary amendments to the housing renewal policy to enable loans to be granted in such circumstances.

**CAB 46/17 LA Nominations for consideration at Cabinet**

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 as listed in the report.

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

The Management Committee of Bishopton Centre Pupil Referral Unit - Mrs A White and Mrs C Hart