

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 14th December, 2017.

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

Officers: Neil Schneider (CE), Beccy Brown, Ged Morton (HR&L), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Sarah Bowman - Abuna (A&H), Martin Gray, Diane McConnell (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Richard McGuckin (EG&D), Jamie McCann, (CS), Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Gary Woods, Peter Bell (DCE) .

Also in attendance: Cllr Carol Clark and Cllr Gillian Corr.
Dave Pickard (Chair of the SLSCB).
Mark Kirkham (Mazars).

Apologies: Cllr Ann McCoy.

CAB Welcome and Evacuation Procedure 92/17

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

CAB Declarations of Interest 93/17

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Sickness Absence as he was a member of GMB.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016 / 2017 as his wife was the SLSCB Business Manager.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016 / 2017 as he was employed by TEWV.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016 / 2017 as he was member of Catalyst.

Councillor Norma Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - School Performance 2016 – 2017 for Vulnerable Pupils as she had grandchildren that attended 2 of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - School Performance 2016 – 2017 for Vulnerable Pupils as he had grandchild that attended 1 of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - School Performance 2016 – 2017 for Vulnerable Pupils as he was a Governor at one of the schools detailed within the report and he had grandchildren that attended some of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - School Performance 2016 – 2017 for Vulnerable Pupils as he

was a Governor at two of the schools detailed within the report and he had grandchildren that attended some of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Volunteering Update Report as he was a member of Catalyst.

**CAB
94/17** **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**CAB
95/17** **People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Sickness Absence**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the People Select Committee's Review of Sickness Absence.

RESOLVED that:

1. All steps be taken to ensure staff are clearly aware of the wide range of support that the Council makes available for them to access.
2. Given that it already meets the criteria, the Council signs up to the TUCs Dying to Work campaign which proposes that Employers sign a voluntary charter to provide additional protection from dismissal for any person with a terminal diagnosis because of their condition.
3. A targeted approach to the top locations for each sickness type, including premises assessments for staff health and wellbeing (linked to SWIS review into working environments), be adopted.
4. The Council's bid for the Better Health at Work Award Continuing Excellence accreditation be endorsed.
5. Developments be pursued around Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use to reduce workstation discomfort, including pop-up warnings reminding staff to take a break from their computer and workplace workouts.
6. Management training in mental health awareness to aid early intervention be made available.
7. Smarter ways of working be fully explored to enable greater flexibility for staff and create appropriate work / life balances.
8. The Council encourages staff to take up the new in-house flu vaccination offered through Occupational Health.
9. Regular team meetings and individual 1:1s (incorporating employee health and wellbeing considerations) be scheduled for staff across the Council so that any pressure points can be identified early and addressed.

10. The new draft SBC Work / Life Balance and Attendance Policy proposals, and the emphasis on promoting the health and wellbeing of the workforce be endorsed.

CAB 96/17 Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/2017

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016 / 2017.

The report was presented to Cabinet by the Independent Chair of the SLSCB (Dave Pickard) for information and outlined the achievements and future challenges of the SLSCB. The Annual Report was attached to the report.

There was a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 for Local Safeguarding Children Boards to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area, including the implementation of Serious Case Review action plans.

In accordance with this statutory requirement the report was submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Well-being Board.

It was the intention of SLSCB to share this with all partner agencies and with those that had influence over the services provided to children and families in Stockton-on-Tees. The purpose of this report was:

- To provide an outline of the main activities of SLSCB and achievements during 2016-17;
- To comment on the effectiveness of safeguarding activity and of SLSCB in supporting this;
- To provide the public and partner agencies with an overview of safeguarding activity;
- To identify gaps and challenges in service development in the year ahead.

The key achievements and challenges of the Board for 2016 / 2017 were referenced in the SLSCB 2016 /2017 Annual Report. The following was a snapshot of some of the other achievements:

- All of the Councils Children's Homes, including those developed as part of the joint venture with Spark of Genius, were rated good or outstanding.
- £31million secured to invest in school and nursery buildings across the Borough.
- 62.4 per cent of young people across Stockton-on-Tees attained five A*-C grades including English and Maths.
- The joint multi agency Children's Hub with Hartlepool providing advice and guidance on services and support for children, young people and families was established
- 99% of early years provision were rated good or outstanding
- 4.7% young people were either Not in Education, Employment or

Training or Not Known, compared to a national average of 5.7%.

- Concordat for Children in Custody alongside a Tees Vulnerable People in Custody Group report was considered and an action plan for improvement was developed.
- Findings from the CQC Children Looked After and Safeguarding Review (Hartlepool) was discussed to consider the implications for services in Stockton-on-Tees. Assurance was obtained around the CAMHS DNA pathway, and the LAC Nurse/Named Nurse arrangements. This was a productive piece of work from which learning was shared to improve local circumstances.
- 700 taxi drivers and private hire firms received training so they can help protect vulnerable adults and safeguard children
- The Youth Offending Team was praised by the Youth Justice Board for its “excellent performance”, particular reference was made to safeguarding work.

The embedded working approach introduced during 2016 / 2017 would remain, focusing on:

- Ensuring co-operation and co-ordination between agencies
- Effective challenge and scrutiny of policies, practice and performance
- Enabling change to improve outcomes

In addition the Board would continue with its two operational priority areas of:

- a) Preventing harm: tackling the root causes of neglect, with a focus on domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol and parental mental health
- b) Protecting vulnerable children: reducing the risks of children and young people who are VEMT or at risk of being VEMT.

It would also continue to build upon its third priority area - business improvement.

Work would also include the following, which was not in any particular order and in some cases was already underway:

- Review and propose preferred footprint option for the new Safeguarding Partnership that is required from the Children & Social Work Act 2017.
- Continue to request Operational Assurance Reports as a means of facilitating effective scrutiny and challenge.
- Champion the Graded Care Profile 2 Assessment Tool
- Request assurance of effectiveness of the Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Children’s Hub.
- Recognise the importance of ensuring Children Missing Education are monitored / seen to avoid them being ‘lost’.
- Challenge all agencies to share learning from single agency audits highlighting that this is not solely the function of Children’s Social Care.
- Monitor improvements and the impact made, following the appointment of the VEMT Co-ordinator.
- Highlight and share good practice related to the ‘Future in Mind Programme’ that will take place within schools to support mental wellbeing of children.
- Continue to ask ‘So What’ and ‘Why’ in order to establish the impact of work taking place with children and their families.

All partners of SLSCB strive to make continual improvements of their effectiveness in ensuring the safety and well-being of children both individually and as a partnership whilst at the same time recognising the challenges faced, locally, regionally and nationally.

RESOLVED that the 2016 / 2017 Annual Report of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board be noted.

**CAB
97/17**

School Performance 2016 – 2017 for vulnerable pupils

Consideration was given to a report that presented a headline, summary analysis of performance in the academic year 2016 – 2017 against all key stages for all providers in the Borough for vulnerable pupils. It was informed by the latest available data, some of which remained un-validated and compared to national averages where they exist. It includes performance outcomes for:

- Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding;
- Performance by gender;
- Black and Minority Ethnic children;
- Looked After Children;
- Children with Special Needs;
- Attendance and exclusion figures for Stockton

Members were informed that a scrutiny review of the role of education services within the Council would take place to examine the Council's role in supporting vulnerable children and young people and promoting inclusion.

RESOLVED that:

1. The standards and achievement across the Borough for vulnerable groups of children be noted.
2. The improving trends for pupils from vulnerable groups and in particular outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in primary school be noted.
3. The work under way for Looked After Children and Young people be noted and the concern regarding their educational attainment be noted.
4. The concerns arising from increased use of exclusions, both fixed term and permanent, at secondary schools in 2016/2017 be noted and that this area would be a focus for a scrutiny review.

**CAB
98/17**

Annual Audit Letter 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report on the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17.

In 2012 the Audit Commission appointed Mazars LLP to act as external auditors to the Council. Following the abolition of the Audit Commission, audit appointments were made by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

A formal stage in the annual audit process was the production of the "Annual Audit Letter". The Annual Audit Letter for 2016/17 had been received and was attached to the report. Mark Kirkham (Mazars LLP) was in attendance at the meeting and detailed the contents of the Annual Audit Letter for 2016/17.

The Annual Audit Letter summarised the auditor's findings from the 2016/17 audit. In line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council. Mazars LLP were required to submit the Annual Audit Letter to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited and it would appear on their website in due course.

Mazars LLP had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's financial statements for 2016/17 and in their opinion they;

- gave a true and fair view of the financial position of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as at 31 March 2017 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- had been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17.

Mazars LLP had issued an unqualified value for money conclusion stating that it was satisfied that "the Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".

The report recognised that the Council faced future challenges but went on to say that "the Council manages its finances carefully to balance service needs and available resources in the short and medium term. The Council's most recent MTFP recognises the ongoing financial constraints and the need to continue to review services to identify cost efficiencies."

Mazars LLP were required to report on the "Whole of Government Accounts" return completed by the Council. Their report stated that the return "was consistent with the audited financial statements".

The Code of Audit Practice required Mazars to consider whether information published alongside the financial statements was consistent with those statements and their knowledge and understanding of the Council. In their opinion, the information in the Narrative Report was consistent with the audited financial statements.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 be noted.

**CAB
99/17** **Domestic Abuse Policy**

Consideration was given to a report on the Domestic Abuse Policy.

On 18th May 2017 Cabinet endorsed the Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2022 for the Borough.

The new strategy strengthened the focus on working together as local partners', agencies and communities to prevent individuals from becoming victims or perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

Domestic abuse was a significant problem which had a devastating impact on victims and their families. National data suggested that domestic abuse was not rare and that in a workplace with 2,000 employees approximately 120 people would have experienced domestic abuse within the last 12 months.

It was therefore important that the Council had effective support in place for the employees who may be victims, or perpetrators, of domestic abuse. As a large Employers, with over 70% of the employees living within the Borough, it was important that the Council supported its employees who may be victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The Council had had a Domestic Abuse Policy in place since 2009, however following the introduction of the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy, it was considered timely to update and re-launch the policy.

The principles of the existing policy were generally felt to work well and therefore the policy was largely unchanged. However changes had been made to include reference to the new Strategy, updates to the contact details for the Domestic Abuse Champions (Champions) and other support available, and linkage to the Council's culture statement.

The report outlined the content of the revised Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees and a copy of the revised policy was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the revised Domestic Abuse Policy be approved

CAB **Financial Update & Medium Term Financial Plan**
100/17

Consideration was given to a report presents the financial performance and position at the end of the second quarter of the 2017/18 financial year and updates the Medium Term Financial Plan accordingly.

A table within the report detailed the projected budget outturn position for each directorate in 2017/18, based on information to 30 September 2017. The reasons for any significant movement in variances from the last reported position (in excess of £100,000) were set out for each directorate.

The Capital Programme was attached to the report and summarised in a table within the report.

On 5th December the National Employers for Local Government Services made a final pay offer to the trade unions, covering period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020. The financial implications and impact on the updated MTFP were summarised in an addendum that had been circulated.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the current level of General Fund balances be noted.
2. The emerging issues for the MTFP be supported including the significant

increase in costs to support the Looked After Children to the point that costs were over £20 million per year

3. The revised Capital Programme be noted.

CAB 101/17 Private Sector Housing : The Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Rent Repayment Orders and Civil Penalty Charges

Consideration was given to a report on Private Sector Housing: The Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Rent Repayment Orders and Civil Penalty Charges.

The private rented sector had grown significantly in recent years and nationally accounted for one in five households. Against this backdrop Government was keen to ensure that authorities had the necessary tools to ensure a quality private rented sector in their locality (in terms of both housing condition and management) and could effectively tackle rogue landlords.

The Council aimed to support good landlords who provided decent well maintained homes, whilst taking a proactive approach to tackling rogue and irresponsible landlords who knowingly rent out accommodation that was unlicensed, substandard or unsafe. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 (which received Royal Assent on 12th May 2016 and was enacted in October 2016) introduced a range of new powers which had been given to local authorities. The purpose of this report was to update members on the new powers and to seek approval to adopt at a local level.

RESOLVED that:

1. The provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 ('the Act') and the introduction of civil penalty charges for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004 be endorsed.
2. The power to apply for a banning order against certain persons convicted of a banning order offence to prohibit them from letting property for a specified period of time be endorsed.
3. The power to apply for a Rent Repayment Order for certain offences to seek recovery of rent paid by Universal Credit be agreed.
4. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Growth and Development Services to enforce the provisions of the Act and that the Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly.
5. Delegated authorisation be given to the Director of Economic Growth and Development Services to prepare and agree a penalty fee structure in respect of the penalty charges in line with the Act and Statutory Guidance for relevant offences specified under the Act, in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Communications and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing.
6. A fee structure be adopted to set penalty charges for certain specified offences under the Housing and Planning Act in accordance with Statutory Guidance.

7. The introduction of a Private Sector Housing Civil Penalty Policy (Appendix A), Rent Repayment Order Policy (Appendix B) and amendments to the Council's Enforcement and Regulatory Policy for Private Sector Housing (Appendix C) be approved.

8. The Director of Economic Growth and Development Services be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the above policies, should this be required, once further regulations have been introduced.

CAB 102/17 **Volunteering Update Report**

Consideration was given to a report on the implementation of the Volunteering Strategy Framework that was originally endorsed by Cabinet in September 2015.

The report followed previous reports made to Cabinet describing the development of a Volunteering Strategy for the Borough (September 2015) and its initial implementation (May 2016).

The development of a Volunteering Strategy for the Borough was something Cabinet supported as part of its commitment to delivering the Key Objective in the Council Plan to:

“Support the continued development of a strong and vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise Sector.”

The development and delivery of the Volunteering Strategy, entitled “Better Together” was being led by Catalyst Stockton in partnership with the Council and other key stakeholders in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE). A copy of the Strategy was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. Catalyst be supported in delivery of the Volunteering Strategy.
2. Plans to include the Volunteers Market (as part of Volunteering Month) in the annual programme of events supported by the Council Events Framework be supported.

CAB 103/17 **Street Lighting - Invest to Save Replacement Programme Close Out Report**

Consideration was given to a report on Street Lighting - Invest to Save Replacement Programme Close Out.

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the completion and close out of the whole scale replacement of street lighting lanterns with LEDs.

The project had seen significant improvements and investment in lighting across every ward in the Borough. As well as the physical works to replace the lanterns and a significant number of older columns the scale of engagement with residents right across the Borough had not only touched nearly every

household but had generated an incredibly positive feedback with over 75% of residents satisfied with the new lighting scheme.

Just prior to Cabinet considering the report the national highways and transport survey headline results were published which was reporting Stockton-on-Tees residents as having the highest satisfaction with street lighting in the country. This was clearly a very positive indicator for the impact of the scheme and an additional accolade to the hard financial and carbon savings identified in the report.

The principle of the scheme was set in the context of a continued reduction in Local Government Funding which had provided the Council with a significant financial challenge. To manage this the Council introduced three big ticket savings items of which one was Energy and Waste. Incorporated in to this area was to reduce the energy and maintenance costs associated with the Borough's street lighting stock.

The Street Lighting Replacement Project commenced in 2014 and was due to conclude in December 2017. During this time the Council would have spent approximately £14m updating 9,100 of its oldest street lighting columns and converting 28,000 street light lanterns to super-efficient, low maintenance LED's. On completion of this project the Council would:-

- Have achieved overall savings of £1.8M which were a combination of reductions in maintenance and energy costs.
- Have reduced its carbon emissions by 3140 tonnes per annum (45.6%).
- Have a street lighting system that met current British Standards giving a safer environment to its residents and road users.
- Have invested approximately £4M in Stockton based business's boosting the economy & securing employment.
- Have a complete & accurate inventory of its street lighting stock.
- Be one of the first Local Authorities in the Country to have a fully LED street lighting system.
- Have achieved residential satisfaction, with 75% preferring the new LED street lighting

Members received an addendum to the report that highlighted that the Council takes part in the annual National Highways & Transport survey. The survey collected public perspectives on, and satisfaction with, Highways and Transport Services in Local Authority areas across the Country. A record number of Highway Authorities (112) participated in the survey in 2017 and Stockton Borough Councils' Highways and Transport services received the overall highest public satisfaction rating across the country. Stockton was also rated top in road safety locally, provision of street lighting, community transport fares and provision of safe crossing points. The report provided further details of the recently published results from the 2017 survey.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. It be noted that Stockton-on-Tees is the highest ranking Council area in the country for resident satisfaction with street lighting (national highways and

transport survey 2017).

**CAB
104/17 Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy Consultation**

Consideration was given to a report on Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy Consultation.

Further to the Licensing Committee meeting in December 2016 at which the Committee agreed for Licensing Officers to consult with the taxi trade on the proposed amendments to the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy. The consultation had taken place and copy of the consultation was attached the report.

A number of members of the trade responded to the online survey and written response from licensing consultants / private hire operators were also received.

The taxi trade meeting on Thursday 20 July 2017 provided a further opportunity for Officers to engage with approximately 170 members of the trade attending. The main areas of discussion were around the proposal to change the vehicles standards from a Euro Emission Standard to an Age Related Policy in relation to new vehicles coming on to the fleet and when they have to be removed from the fleet.

A copy of a letter from V&F Associates dated 29 November 2017 and a copy of the response had been circulated to Members.

RESOLVED that:

1. An Age Restriction Policy be introduced for vehicles (No older than 5 years from the date of first registration for new vehicles and an maximum age limit of 12 years for vehicles already licensed) from 01 January 2020.
2. The Disclosure and Barring Update Service be implemented from 01 June 2018.
3. An Age Restriction Policy be introduced for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) (No older than 5 years from the date of first registration for new vehicles and an maximum age limit of 15 years for vehicles already licensed) from 01 January 2020.
4. The amendment of the approval of advertisements for vehicles from 1 June 2018.
5. The requirement to have vehicle roof identification numbers on licensed vehicles does not be adopted.