

## **Cabinet**

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 21st June, 2018.

**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:** Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Peter Bell (DCE), Ged Morton (HR&L), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Richard McGuckin (ED&D), Ann Workman (AH).

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Phil Dennis, Cllr Lynn Hall and Cllr Dave Wilburn.

**Apologies:** None.

### **CAB 17/18**      **Welcome and Evacuation Procedure**

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

### **CAB 18/18**      **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 as he was a member of the TVCA – The Land Commission and TVCA – The Education, Skills & Employment Committee.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 as he was a member of the TVCA Cabinet.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 as he was a substitute member of the TVCA Cabinet.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Apprenticeship Update as he was the Chair of Governors at the Learning and Skills Service.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - Apprenticeship Update as he was on the Governing Body at the Learning and Skills Service.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Introduction of a Licenced Premises Award Scheme: Setting the Bar as he was a member of Tees Music Alliance.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 14 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2023 as he was a Director of Thirteen.

### **CAB 19/18**      **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**CAB  
20/18**

### **Council Plan – Annual Report 2017/18**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the Council Plan 2017/18.

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 2017/18 the Council had continued to develop as an organisation and had:

- Been shortlisted as 'Council of the Year' in local government's three most prestigious national awards – the LGC Achievement Awards, the Association of Public Service Excellence Awards and the Municipal Journal Achievement Awards – which was a verification that the Council was at the leading edge of delivering vital public services and it would continue to innovate, develop and improve to make sure it was delivering the very best for the people of the Borough.
- Maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the sixth consecutive year, securing the highest possible 'compliance + rating in 12 categories.
- Continued to implement improvements in direct response to the Ipsos MORI residents' survey undertaken across the Borough in 2015.
- Received another extremely positive report from the Auditors, who said: "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."
- Continued to invest in its employees through the Shaping a Brighter Future programme, maintained the Silver Investor in People award and achieved the highest 'Continuing Excellence' level in the Better Health at Work Awards.
- Restructured and reduced the size of the Senior Management Team to ensure it reflected the council's changing shape and size.
- Continued to challenge and change the way it worked through the Smarter Working in Stockton programme as it continued to deliver services with a 25% reduction in the size of our workforce since the programme of cuts began in 2010/11.

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

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**CAB  
21/18      National Democracy Week 2018**

Consideration was given to a report that informed Members about the inaugural 2018 National Democracy Week (NDW) organised by Cabinet Office and outlined the proposed campaign of activities and events for participating.

Democratic Services sought the views of Cabinet about the Council's participation in National Democracy Week 2018. As usual events/activities would be conducted which fitted in with the NDW theme and aims, raising awareness about how residents could make sure that their voice was heard and promoting voter registration.

NDW branding would be used and publicity would be made through the Council's network of partners, social media and the Council website. This would include:

- National Suffrage Centenary initiatives (e.g. Vote 100; EqualTeas)
- UK Youth Parliament's Make your mark Ballot

The National Democracy Week 2018 Programme would include:

- Stand for what you believe in "Be a Councillor" campaign
- July's Citizenship Ceremony hosted by the Mayor at the Town hall
- Meet the Mayor and Town Hall tours
- Getting Hard workshops
- School Council Assemblies & Elections
- Voter Registration
- National Democracy Week web page

The NDW Programme would be delivered by following standard practice of:

- i. collaborating with other Council Services (e.g. Communications; Registrars; Youth Direction) and external organisations / groups (e.g. Catalyst; schools and colleges; parish/town councils)
- ii. involving the Mayor through her civic engagements; and
- iii. maximise the use of existing activities, events and meetings in the democracy diary

Participation in National Democracy Week would be an extension of the work that the Council was already doing to increase registration amongst under-registered groups across the borough and democratic participation. It would also support the ongoing performance targets to maximise voter registration and accuracy of the voter register.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.

2. The Council participate in 2018 National Democracy Week.
3. The programme for the 2018 NDW campaign be agreed.

**CAB 22/18 Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018**

Consideration was given to a report that sought consent in principle to the making of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 in order to enable the devolution of statutory duties regarding the provision of adult education that was held by the Secretary of State for Education and the associated Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). These powers would support TVCA in delivering its aim of furthering the sustainable growth of the Tees Valley.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Consent be given in principle to the making of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018.
2. Delegation be given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to give final consent to the Regulations, once requested by the Secretary of State.

**CAB 23/18 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:-

TSAB – 24 April 2018

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

**CAB 24/18 Apprenticeship Update**

Consideration was given to a report that gave an update on apprenticeships.

The Government had made a commitment to increasing the quantity and quality of apprenticeships in England to three million starts by the end of 2020. In order to support this commitment, with effect from April 2017, the government changed the way in which apprenticeship training in England was funded through the introduction of an apprenticeship levy, new apprenticeship standards and public sector apprenticeship targets.

Apprenticeships were a great way for organisations to improve the skills base of their employees. They were a way to recruit new staff, access new talent and to re-train or up skill existing staff of all ages and levels of experience in a wide variety of roles. However there had been criticisms of the operation of the levy with employers finding it bureaucratic, funding rules complex, and a lack of availability of high quality apprenticeships.

Concerns and issues from across the sectors on the operation of the new apprenticeship levy were reflected in Department for Education statistics published in May 2018 which showed a significant reduction in apprenticeship new starts since the introduction of the levy. This questions the effectiveness of the apprenticeship levy and it had been predicted that the government was unlikely to hit its target of 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020.

Notwithstanding the issues and barriers to spending the apprenticeship levy and accessing relevant quality apprenticeships the Council had performed well corporately with 54 Employees starting an apprenticeship in 17/18 (75% of the corporate public sector target). The Council would continue to work to identify appropriate apprenticeship opportunities and maximise the use of levy funds.

From 1 April 2018 the Government had also introduced an ability for organisations to make available up to 10% of its levy funds to one recipient organisation to be spent on apprenticeship opportunities and it was proposed that subject to the availability of levy funding consideration was given to including this option in the delivery of apprenticeship opportunities.

The report provided an update on the Council's apprenticeship levy and progress towards the public sector apprenticeship target.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The issues and concerns regarding the apprenticeship levy and national performance statistics be noted.
2. The detail of the Council's Apprenticeship Levy and progress towards the public sector Apprenticeship target be noted.
3. A further update report be received in June 2019.
4. Subject to the Council's planned spend of the levy, the Director of HR, Legal and Communications, in consultation with Cabinet Member, can identify an organisation to use up to 10% of the apprenticeship levy as part of the Council's approach to delivery of apprenticeship opportunities.

**CAB  
25/18**

### **Introduction of a Licenced Premises Award Scheme: Setting the Bar**

Consideration was given to a report that proposed a licensed premises award scheme for Stockton which promoted a thriving, safe, night-time economy supporting improvements in the management of licensed premises and promoting responsible drinking in Stockton.

In the absence of a suitable national accreditation scheme, the alternative would be to develop a bespoke scheme for Stockton Borough.

Attached to the report was a proposed scheme. The scheme was based on meeting a range of standards (mandatory, desirable and exceptional) in respect of the four licensing principles.

The scheme would apply to all existing licensed premises, clubs with a further

phase of the scheme to include off-sales in Stockton.

Originally it was proposed that premises meeting all the mandatory standards would receive Bronze status; premises meeting all mandatory and all desirable standards would receive Silver status; and premises meeting all mandatory, all desirable and all exceptional standards would receive Gold status. However, following feedback from the Trade it was felt more appropriate that bronze would continue to be awarded to premises meeting all the mandatory standards and that premises meeting all of the mandatory and a percentage of desirable standards would achieve silver and similarly gold would be awarded to premises meeting all mandatory and a percentage of desirable and exceptional standards. Justification would need to be provided to allow a judgement to be made.

Premises achieving Gold award could have the option of presentation of their award at Full Council.

Assessment forms would be available for on-line completion as well as hard copy and it was suggested that assessments could be carried out on a quarterly basis by volunteers from the Talent Network as part of a rolling programme.

The accreditation results would be published on the Council's website. The three routes into the scheme were detailed within the report.

RESOLVED that the introduction of the licensed premises award scheme for Stockton be agreed.

**CAB**      **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment**  
**26/18**

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

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – March 2017, required Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as was reasonably practicable and within available resources, for working parents, or parents who were studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

The information of what local authorities should take into account to secure sufficient childcare places was detailed within the report.

The Local Authority was responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in the report, geographical division and date of publication.

In addition, the Local Authority was required by legislation to maintain a service that provided information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1st September 2017 publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it at a minimum termly on 1st January, 1st April

and 1st September.

The CSA report provided information on how the Local authority would meet its legal duty.

Stockton-on-Tees had a good range of quality childcare across the borough, however specific gaps had been identified. Key priorities for 2018 were detailed within the report.

The action plan set out the actions that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council would take to deliver priorities. The detail of each action would be found in individual implementation plans held by the responsible officer/team. The action plan covered 2018 – 2019 and the implementation plans for the delivery of the specific actions identified could be found within individual team delivery plans.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the associated priorities for 2018-2019 be approved.
2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan for 2018-2019 be approved.

**CAB 27/18 LA Nominations for Cabinet on 21 June 2018**

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 following nominations to school / academy Governing Bodies.

Thornaby CE Primary School - Mrs J Rigg (School nomination)  
Tilery Primary School - Mrs E Miller  
William Cassidi CE Primary School - Mrs V Fletcher

RESOLVED that the above appointments be made to the vacant Governorships subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure.

**CAB 28/18 Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2023**

Consideration was given to a report on The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).

The RoWIP was a statutory document required under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. The first RoWIP was adopted by the Council in 2008 as a 10 year policy document which covered the period between 2008-2018 in respect of the management and improvements of the local rights of way network.

Works had been undertaken to prepare the 2nd RoWIP which would cover the period between 2018 and 2023. This new document provided an update of works and improvements carried out on the rights of way network over the last 10 years.

The purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval to adopt the Council's 2nd Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018-2023) for Stockton as a 5 year policy document.

The ROWIP was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the Council's 2nd Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018-2023) be approved.

**CAB  
29/18**

### **Housing Strategy / Homelessness Reduction Strategy**

Consideration was given to a report that sought approval to adopt the Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and the Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023. These documents set out the Councils overarching vision and priorities for housing (across all tenures) and homelessness prevention in the borough over the coming 5-year period.

The Housing Strategy was a framework for how the Council would address the challenges it would face in the coming years, giving direction to partners and stakeholders involved in housing across all tenures (including residents, registered providers, private developers, government agencies, private landlords and voluntary and community groups), so that they could help and support the Council to provide the right homes in the right places.

Both the Council Plan 2018-2023 and the Economic Growth Plan 2017-2020 included a number of housing related priorities. In essence these were collated in the Housing Strategy which detailed how the Council would work in partnership and across tenure to deliver the Councils housing ambitions.

In addition, the Housing Strategy would support the implementation of the emerging Local Plan.

There were 3 high level strategic objectives detailed in the Housing Strategy and under each of these 3 objectives a series of priorities and actions were detailed. The 3 core proposed objectives were detailed within the report.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was enacted on the 3rd April 2018. As detailed in the 'Homelessness Reduction Act' Cabinet Report (January 2018) this Act had significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also required housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who were vulnerable.

Previously local authorities could decide whether to prepare a separate Homelessness Strategy, in Stockton it was decided against a separate strategy and detailed the homelessness key priorities within the former Housing Strategy. However the 2017 Act required each council to produce a bespoke Homelessness Reduction Strategy, which must detail the key objectives and actions it would undertake to meet the requirements of this legislation.



Detailed within the proposed Homelessness Reduction Strategy were 4 strategic objectives (again each was supported by a number of priorities and actions). In developing these 3 over-arching objectives consideration had been given to key national homelessness priorities, the Council's commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in the communities and the bespoke local circumstances. For example detailed analysis had been to how best to intervene and address the year on year increase in the number of households approaching / seeking assistance from the Council's Homelessness and Housing Solutions Service and the key reasons why households find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The proposed 4 key strategic objectives were detailed within the report..

Each Strategy was proposed to run for a 5-year period (2018 – 2023), to ensure each remained compliant with any changes in national legislation and continued to reflect local issues and circumstances it was proposed that an annual review be undertaken and that the first annual review be considered in the 2019/20 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The emerging Local Plan which would go to public examination in June 2018. The outcome of the enquiry may result in the need to make changes to the Housing Strategy to ensure it continued to support the emerging plans and policies. These changes and further annual reviews would be undertaken by the service directorate and Cabinet were therefore asked to delegate authorisation to the Director of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Communications and Cabinet Member for Regeneration to make any necessary changes to either strategy.

It was noted that should significant or whole scale change be required to either strategy a further report would be presented back to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The draft Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023 be approved.
2. To ensure both strategies remain compliant with any changes in national legislation, and are fit for purpose it is proposed to undertake an annual review of each document (as detailed in paragraph 13 and as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report), if appropriate to undertake an earlier review in response to recommendations arising from the Local Plan enquiry in June 2018. Following both reviews delegated authorisation be granted to the to the Director of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Communications and Cabinet Member for Regeneration to make any necessary changes.

**CAB  
30/18**

### **Review of Alderman Criteria**

Consideration was given to a report on the criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Aldermen and comment on whether it was still fit for purpose.

The criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Aldermen was last reviewed by Council in November 2013 (Min C75/13 refers) following proposals submitted by

the Members Advisory Panel (MAP) which specifically addressed whether the criteria in place at that time was appropriate.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, for the title to be conferred, not less than two thirds of Members voting must agree at a Council meeting specially convened for the purpose of doing so.

The criteria in place prior to 2013 was that when considering whether it was appropriate to confer the title of Alderman on a former Councillor, their 'reckonable service' as a Councillor should be taken into account.

Reckonable service for the purpose of conferring this title had been established as being at least 20 years; or alternatively 15 years with relevant Councils including holding a senior office over a long period. It had also been practice not to count service with the former Cleveland County Council where that service was contemporaneous with service with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council or its predecessor authorities.

At the time of the last review in 2013, MAP were specifically asked:-

- if the 20 year period (without holding a senior office) should be changed.
- whether 15 years (including holding a senior office) was appropriate over a long period.
- if senior office should be defined e.g. holding an office which attracts a special responsibility allowance.
- whether a long period for holding such an office should also be defined e.g. 8 years.

MAP subsequently agreed that the criteria should be revised and Cabinet/Council ultimately agreed their recommendations as follows:-

- That any Councillor who had an appropriate length of service, whether or not including holding a senior office with the Council, should qualify for consideration.
- That an appropriate length of service should be 12 years, which equated to three election terms, and that this should be the only criterion taken into consideration.

Following the decision of Council to review the criterion for conferring Alderman status to that set out at paragraph 6, the honour had been bestowed on 20 former Councillors.

MAP at its meeting held on 4th May 2018, were invited to consider the criteria once again and determine whether it was still fit for purpose.

It was the view of the Panel that the length of service (12 years) was too short and that it would be more appropriate for it to be extended to 16 years.

MAP were also keen to ensure that any nominations put forward by groups were merited and took into account factors such as the nominees previous attendance at Council / Committee meetings and / or contribution they had made to the Council. It would therefore be incumbent upon political groups

nominating to ensure that their nominations merited consideration based on these factors prior to submission.

MAP therefore recommended to Cabinet / Council that the appropriate length of service held by a former Councillor in order to qualify for consideration as a nominee for Alderman status should be extended from 12 years to 16 years.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The appropriate length of service held by a former Councillor in order to qualify for consideration as a nominee for Alderman status should be extended from 12 years to 16 years.
2. Nominations put forward take into account factors such as the nominees previous attendance at Council / Committee meetings and / or contribution the individual had made to the Council.

**CAB  
31/18**      **Independent Remuneration Panel**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the findings from the review of Stockton Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and the recommended changes to the scheme to be implemented from 1 April 2019.

The relevant legislation was The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The regulations provided that an authority must make a members' allowances scheme which must include a basic allowance payable to all members and may provide for the following:

- Special Responsibility Allowance
- Dependant's carers' allowance
- Travelling and subsistence allowance
- Co-optees' allowance

The same Regulations also provided for local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations to the Authority about the allowances to be paid. Details of the Panel members was attached to the report.

The Panel were required to review the operation of the Members Allowance Scheme as requested and on this occasion, following a request by Members, the Panel had reviewed the Co-optees allowance only.

The Members' Allowances Scheme was based on the recommendations that were agreed by Council on 30 April 2014.

The principles of the review were as follows:-

- Comparable figures, using comparable authorities and Nationally available information
- Consideration of previous allowances paid to co-optees through the Stockton Members Allowance Scheme and the number of co-optees appointed from 2005 – 2018

- Consideration of the time input expected of co-optees
- Draw Conclusions
- Agree recommendations to be made to the Full Council

In order to draw their conclusion and formulate recommendations for consideration by Cabinet and agreement by Council, the Panel re-assessed the expected time commitment of co-opted representatives, compared and analysed the amount paid to co-optees across the North East and with those authorities that were deemed to be near neighbours as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants. In addition the Panel considered the number of parent governor co-optees appointed compared to previous years and the amount of allowance previously paid.

The IRP agreed that the allowance paid should reflect the level of responsibility and time commitment required by the role. They acknowledged and applauded the work of co-optees and the role they play in the consideration of Education matters on the Councils committees however, the IRP felt strongly that this role should be performed willingly for the benefit of the public and not attract any remuneration.

The Panel would also like to encourage the recruiting bodies to actively promote the role of the co-optee to avoid vacancies and agreed that it would be appropriate for expenses to be paid in line with the existing members allowances for travel and subsistence scheme. The IRP recommended this approach on a pilot basis until such time as the full review of the Members Allowance scheme.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted and the following changes to the Council's Members Allowance Scheme be approved:-
  1. In accordance with the practice adopted by the majority of other local authorities in the region and the Council's CIPFA family nationally, remuneration of co-optee post for Diocesan and Parent Governor representatives be removed.
  2. Travel and subsistence allowance be paid to each of these co-opted representatives in accordance with the rates specified within the Members Allowances Scheme.
  3. Council write to those recruiting parent governors and diocesan reps to encourage them to actively promote the role.
  4. Changes to the scheme be implemented with effect from April 2019.