

## Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 7th March, 2019.

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

**Officers:** Neil Schneider (CE), Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Peter Bell (DCE), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Garry Cummings (F&BS), Richard McGuckin (ED&D), Jamie McCann (CS), Reuben Kench (C,L&E), Martin Gray, Jane Webb (CS), Ann Workman (AH).

**Also in attendance:** Members of the Big Committee, Members of the Public.

**Apologies:** Councillor Jim Beall.

### **CAB 140/18**     **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Bright Minds Big Futures - The Big Plan as the report mentioned the Georgian Theatre which was managed by Tees music Alliance.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Minutes of Various Bodies as he was a Cabinet Member of the TVCA.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Minutes of Various Bodies as he was employed by TEWV NHS Trust.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 – Minutes of Various Bodies as she was a member of TEWV NHS Trust.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Strengthening Probation as he was employed by TEWV NHS Trust.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Strengthening Probation as she was a member of TEWV NHS Trust.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 – Progress on Reshaping Town Centres as the report mentioned the Georgian Theatre which was managed by Tees Music Alliance.

### **CAB 141/18**     **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 21 February 2019.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 21 February 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**CAB**     **Bright Minds Big Futures - The Big Plan**  
**142/18**

Consideration was given to a report that sought endorsement for The Big Plan, a plan prepared by the Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative.

The Big Plan was the culmination of a two year programme of engagement with young people, which was based on a specific focus on engagement and participation, using specific projects such as SBC Correspondents, Takeover Challenge and consultation processes to engage and connect with young people across Stockton-on-Tees. These findings, further research and the results of an online survey had enabled the initiative to gain a basic understanding of what it felt like to be a young person growing up in the Borough, hopes for the future, and therefore the details and proposals in The Big Plan.

The Council's ambition was to make the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees a place which was both great to grow up and a place which would also create the right conditions for young people to be successful and have a big future.

The vision for children and young people was of a commitment to ensuring children and young people were at the heart of the future of the Borough and to understanding what young people want from their perspective to make this happen.

In considering how to take this ambition further forward, an initial outline of an initiative 'Growing up Stockton' was developed as a means of engaging with children and young people. This was partially based around evidence from the Children's Society's model of a good childhood. The approach had been developed and tested through engaging and consulting with young people via BMBF. This initiative had evolved into a young person led movement focusing on:

- Supporting young people to achieve a sense of self
- Ensuring there are stable and supportive relationships
- Providing opportunities for young people to engage in and be supported by wider society.

These priorities also sat at the heart of the new Children and Young People Strategy 2019-23 which was agreed by cabinet on 14 February.

The initiative developed its own identify and brand as Bright Minds Big Futures.

The Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative was approaching its two year anniversary. The initiative began with a heavy emphasis on engagement and participation (as an alternative to existing representational models of engagement), using specific projects such as SBC Correspondents, Takeover Challenge and consultation processes to engage and connect with young people across Stockton-on-Tees.

Securing the engagement of the first cohort of correspondents was critical and this had allowed the Council to develop and nurture positive relationships gaining the trust of those young people involved. This group had in turn brought along friends and family to join the 'movement' which continued to evolve and increase organically.

The report provided details of the work carried out so far and sets out the next steps and recommendations.

A number of key developments worthy of note were outlined within the report.

There had been a number of key milestones and achievements:

- The transition from Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) to the Big Committee (following a proposal submitted by young people which included all of the existing active SYA Members).
- The development of The Big Plan.
- Winning two awards (Youth Led Project of the Year and Individual Personal Development Award) at the regional British Youth Council convention in January and shortlisted for the final in London on March 8th 2019.

BMBF prepared a paper and presentation making suggestions on improving and developing the Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) meeting and processes into a new format wholly designed, implemented and led by young people. These were accepted at the SYA, and changes endorsed by the Children and Young people Select Committee as part of its review into The Child's Journey, agreed by cabinet in February 2019.

Meetings were held more frequently regularly along with a formal bi-monthly meeting which was also attended by the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services.

The BMBF members set the agenda and had redesigned the format of the minutes into a simpler format echoing their own style and branding.

The position of Chair and other roles had all been decided by the Big Committee. The MYP no longer chaired the meeting, but attended in their formal capacity.

Members were recruited by the Committee as individuals not as representatives of institutions. They had full veto on all recruitment, selection and dismissal of Committee Members.

All Committee members sign up to a Pledge (to represent young people in the Borough), and a Code of Conduct and Purpose/Procedure (all devised by the Committee).

The Committee Members all had specific areas of responsibility which link to SBC services. They had the mandate to work directly with Officers, Elected Members, local MP's and external partners.

The Big Plan outlined the 'wish list' of young people in the Borough. The plan had been researched and written by the Committee in consultation with over 400 young people from schools and colleges.

The Big Plan covered the following areas and mirrored the roles of individuals on the Committee:

- Young Peoples Services
- Community Safety
- Environment
- Transport
- Business and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education
- Fitness and Leisure
- Diversity and Equality
- Democratic Services
- Our Priorities

Each area had a number of recommendations/requests and innovative project ideas. Some of the projects were already underway such as work with the Police, Public Health, SBC Social Care and Library Services along with their own initiatives such as 'Take One Leave One' (period poverty), environmental work with Cultivate Tees Valley.

It was envisaged that the Council would work directly with the Big Committee on the implementation of the plan, and would play a key role in engagement of other partners as required.

Members of the Big Committee were in attendance at the meeting and made a presentation to Cabinet. The presentation covered the detail of the Big Committee, the Big Plan and the recent MYP election. Cabinet were then given the opportunity to ask questions and make comment on the presentation.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Big Plan be endorsed.
2. Officers to work with the Big Committee on its implementation.
3. The Big Committee be invited back to Cabinet in October 2019 to report on the first 6 months of implementation.

**CAB 143/18 Children's Services Progress Update: 2018/19 – Quarter 3 (October - December 2018)**

Consideration was given to a report that provided a summary of performance across Children's Services for Quarter 3. It was based on the Children's Strategy priorities agreed by Cabinet in June 2017.

The report summarises performance information in relation to the Children's Services Strategy 2017-20. The strategy, agreed by Cabinet in June 2017, set out the key priorities for Children's Services and the key performance indicators associated with delivery.

The update report was in three parts:

- a. Update on 2018/19 priorities.
- b. Update on other actions and progress against the wider strategy.
- c. A summary of key points.

With regard to giving children the best start in life there were a number of other outcomes and updates to report on:

- a. Take up of the existing free entitlement to 15 hours of education remained at 100%.
- b. The take up of the free offer for disadvantaged 2 year olds was at 94% - a continued and sustained improvement from 2016 when this rate was around 47%.

With regard to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and young people, backed by outstanding social work practice the overall summary position was therefore that:

- a. The Council continued to maintain high performance around timeliness and efficiency of processes;
- b. There was evidence that referrals were increasingly appropriate and that overall contacts, referrals and assessments rates were reducing slightly.
- c. The Council had made significant progress in reducing the number of children classed as being 'in need'.

With regard to a consistent and relentless focus on better outcomes for children in our care and care leavers, in summary:

- a. The Council rate of children in care remained high, and continued to be a significant area of focus.
- b. The Council remained efficient in terms of timeliness.
- c. Despite the high rate of children in care, the Council remained high performing around placement stability.
- d. There were improvements in performance around adoption.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Significant progress in reducing the number of children classed as being 'in need' be noted.
2. The current position in relation to the numbers of children in care be

noted.

3. The continued high performance around meeting statutory deadlines and timescales be noted.

**CAB  
144/18**     **Major Incident Plan**

Consideration was given to a report on the Major Incident Plan.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act the Council had a responsibility to prepare and maintain a Major Incident Plan. The Council were supported by the Joint Authority's arrangement which was known as the Emergency Planning Unit who provided specialist advice and support in the preparation and maintenance of the Plan.

Under the legislation the Council was duty bound to maintain a frequent view of the plan to ensure its currency and ensure that the human resources associated with it remained current within the organisation.

The Major Incident Plan had undergone review in co-operation with the Joint Authority's Emergency Planning Unit. The updated Plan was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the update of the Major Incident Plan be approved.

**CAB  
145/18**     **Employee Survey 2018**

Consideration was given to a report that provided a summary of the 2018 Employee Survey results.

In overview the results continued to be extremely positive with 34 of the 36 questions yielding a positive agreement rate of 50% or more and 22 questions scoring an agreement rate over 70%. Results for 32 of the 36 questions were either up or level with the 2016 results.

Whilst of course there were areas which were identified for improvement, these results should be celebrated, particularly when they were read in the context of ongoing significant change and continually rising work pressures. The 21% reduction in the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees over the last eight years continued to put a pressure on staff to deliver more and in new ways and these results demonstrated that the Council had a workforce that remained committed and proud to serve the people of the Borough and continued to believe that this is great place to work.

Action was underway to make use of the results:

- a. Council-wide results had been shared with employees through KYIT and team briefings and an ongoing programme of communication on action taken on the survey will continue.
- b. Directorate and team results had been shared with Directors and individual action plans were being developed to address specific concerns or areas for development.
- c. A Council-wide action plan was under development with input from the 420 employees who attended the February Setting the Standard sessions. Employees were asked to identify and vote for specific improvement initiatives and to describe further why they recommend the Council as a great place to work. Volunteers also signed up to share these thoughts in a film to be produced for recruitment purposes.
- d. Demographic analysis had been shared with the staff forums for further analysis.
- e. The results had been shared with the Trade Unions and would be discussed in more detail at the next Local Joint Consultative Panel.
- f. Talent Network team would be established to explore the management of poor performance in the organisation and to look for ways this can be improved.
- g. Further work would be undertaken with employees to explore how more support could be provided those with caring responsibilities. The option of establishing a Carers Staff Forum would be tested.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The positive results of the 2018 Employee Survey be noted.
2. The actions set out in paragraph 17 of the report be supported.

**CAB**      **Minutes of Various Bodies**  
**146/18**

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

Safer Stockton Partnership - 4 December 2018  
Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board – 14 February 2019  
Tees Valley Combined Authority – 24 January 2019  
Tees Valley Combined Authority – 31 January 2019

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

**CAB**      **Strengthening Probation**  
**147/18**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed changes being introduced by the Ministry of Justice as part of a review of probation services 'Strengthening probation, building confidence'.

As part of the review the Ministry of Justice had decided to cease all contracts in 2020 and re-tender. The Council played an active role in the creation of the Community Interest Company, Achieving Real Change for Communities (ARCC) in 2014 and the report sought agreement to this support continuing.

The guarantee for the current contract comprised:

- the Annual Liability Cap of £10,560,000 and;
- the Guarantee Aggregate Liability Cap of £14,080,000.

The indication to date was that the Annual Liability Cap for the whole contract package area including Northumbria, was likely to be 30-35% of the total annual contract value, and the Guarantee Aggregate Liability Cap was likely to be 40-45% of annual contract value.

An indicative annual contract value was given by the MOJ for the DTV and Northumbria area of £26 million. However, the annual contract value was heavily caveated by the MOJ but based on the indicative amount, therefore it was likely that the Annual Liability Cap would be £7.8 – 9.1 million and the Guarantee Aggregate Liability Cap would be £10.4 – 11.7 million. A number of partners had indicated support in principle.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the report be noted and the ARCC have continued support in the delivery of local probation services.
2. The provision of a financial guarantee up to the current maximum of £4.886m (current total guarantee of £14.080m less subsidiary guarantees of £9.194m) as part of a revised contract bid by ARCC be agreed, subject to satisfactory subsidiary guarantees being provided to the Council by other partners in the bid (including other local authorities), and to being satisfied as to the financial viability of the ARCC bid and a risk assessment of the guarantee being invoked.
3. The final amount of the guarantee and any subsidiary guarantees be delegated to the Director of Finance and Business Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**CAB 148/18 Progress on Reshaping Town Centres - Future High Streets Fund bids**

Consideration was given to a report on Progress on Reshaping Town Centres - Future High Streets Fund Bids.

Further to the report to Cabinet in December 2018 detailing the challenges facing town centres, the report updated Members on activity and interventions across the Boroughs town centres since December 2018.

As detailed in reports to Cabinet and Council in December 2018, the scale of the challenge facing town centres and the retail sector on a national level was



unprecedented. The threat posed by the changes in the retail sector and function of town centres was acknowledged by Members and the importance of tackling this change was reflected in the approval of up to £30million prudential borrowing for commercial developments and acquisitions which would seek to address some of the key challenges across the Boroughs town centres.

Since then, the ten year investment plan for Tees Valley had been approved at a meeting of the Combined Authority Cabinet in January 2019. This approval provided the opportunity to access additional funds to support the development of the Boroughs town centres and could be used to supplement already approved funds as well as any potential funds secured through the Future High Streets Fund.

The report to Cabinet and Council in December 2018 articulated how the future of our town centres relied on a fundamental repurposing and reshaping of their function and make up, recognising that whilst retail was still very important, particularly the on-going growth of independent retailers, the centres cannot survive predominantly on that use as they had in the past.

Whilst it was demonstrated that the many initiatives and investment from the Council and its partners across the Borough's Town Centres had meant that the impact of these drastic changes had been offset in part, it was clear that further intervention was required.

The report updated Members on the recent progress across the Borough's Town Centres at:-

Billingham  
Thornaby  
Yarm  
Ingleby Barwick  
Stockton

In late December 2018, details of the £675 million Future High Streets Fund were made available to Local Authorities. The aim of the fund was help local high streets evolve and adapt to the challenges presented by structural changes affecting retail and the function of town centres.

The Minister for Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, recently visited the high street to personally understand the challenges but also the opportunities the Council was seizing. The Minister saw first-hand the work undertaken by the Council but he also recognised that having six town centres in one Borough placed a very different challenge on the Council which was not common among many other areas and raising this point with the Minister allowed us to successfully lobby to make more than one bid into the future high street fund.

Following lobbying of government, the opportunity existed for the Council to submit two applications to the Future High Streets Fund. As such, bids were being developed for both Stockton and Yarm. Cabinet was asked to note this activity and endorse the two bids that were being prepared for submission.

As previously reported, the aim of the new fund exactly matched what the Council was trying to achieve in the borough. "...to encourage vibrant town centres where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time." The Future High Streets Fund would support and fund local areas' plans to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future." (MHCLG Policy Paper 29 October 2018).

Full details of assessment criteria had been published with applications to the fund only considered for areas facing significant challenges. Applications would be considered for investment in physical infrastructure, public and other transport access, new housing and workspace development, and investment in land assembly, including to support the densification of residential and workspace around high streets in place of under-used retail units.

The Council was working on the details of an Expression of Interest with a view to meeting the stage 1 submission deadline of 22nd March 2019. Successful applicants from stage 1 would be announced in summer 2019 and would be required to produce detailed business cases for assessment thereafter.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The positive update on activity and engagement across the Borough's town centres be noted.
2. The work undertaken to the Government's future high street fund be noted and the submission of two bids for the town centres of Stockton and Yarm be endorsed.

**CAB  
149/18**      **Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**CAB  
150/18**      **Reshaping Town Centres**

Consideration was given to a report on Reshaping Town Centres.

The report contained exempt information and a resolution passed to exclude the public and press who then left the room for the duration of the item.

RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the exempt report be agreed.

