

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 18th July, 2019.

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

Officers: Julie Danks (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Ian Miles, Garry Cummings (F&BS), Richard McGuckin (ED&D), Ann Workman (AH) Reuben Kench (C,L&E), Martin Grey (CS), Jamie McCann (CS), Margaret Waggott, Peter Bell (DS).

Also in attendance: Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Norma Stephenson.
Members of the Public.

Apologies: None.

CAB 14/19 Welcome and Evacuation Procedure

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

CAB 15/19 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Update on Welfare Related Issues as he was a member of the Infinity Partnership and Catalyst.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Update on Welfare Related Issues as he was a member of the Tees Credit Union.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Update on Welfare Related Issues as she was a member of SDAIS.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Update on Welfare Related Issues as he was employed by TEWV NHS Trust.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Xentrall Annual Report 18-19 as he was a member of NEPO.

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Xentrall Annual Report 18-19 as he was a member of Tees Active.

Councillor Mike Smith declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years as he had a grandchild who attended one of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years as he had a grandchild who attended one of the schools detailed within the report and he was a governor at a school within the Borough.

Councillor Bob Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 9 - An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years as he had a grandchild who attended one of the schools detailed within the report.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 11 - Stockton on Tees Visitors Economy Strategy 2019 – 2025 as he was a non re-numerated Director of TMA.

Councillor Mike Smith declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Economic Climate Update as his employer was named within the report.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 12 - Economic Climate Update as his daughter worked for Thirteen.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 13 - Victoria Estate Redevelopment Update as he was a Director of Thirteen and his daughter worked for Thirteen. Councillor Steve Nelson withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 14 - Armed Forces Community Covenant Update as he had a brother in the armed forces.

**CAB
16/19** **Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**CAB
17/19** **Update on Welfare Related Issues**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the provision of welfare support and actions being undertaken by the Council to support some of the borough's most vulnerable residents.

The report highlighted the following key areas:-

- Universal Credit Roll-Out Timetable
- Universal Credit "Help to Claim"
- Housing Benefit
- Welfare Support Service
- Case Studies
- Take-up Campaigns
- Welfare Assistance Scheme – Back on Track
- Local Council Tax Support
- Care Leavers
- Moneywise (Tees Credit Union)
- Fuel Poverty
- Water Poverty
- Locality Forums / Infinity Partnership

- Advice and Information Services
- Digital Transformation

CAB 18/19 **Electoral Update**

Consideration was given to a report that provided feedback from the Local Elections and European Parliamentary Election in May 2019 and an update on Electoral Registration. The lessons learned will be taken in account as part of planning for future electoral events.

The report highlighted what went well and lessons learned to enable the Returning Officer to plan for future polls.

Once again the elections team were placed under significant pressure between September 2018 and May 2019 delivering the local and Parish elections and then the European Parliamentary Election at short notice. Planning and preparation took place alongside the elections for the Stockton MYP, the Annual Canvass, postal vote refresh exercise and a Household Notification Exercise during February.

The statutory election period for the European Parliamentary election was underway before the polls for the Local Elections had been held. The risks associated with concurrent planning and administration of the polls under different legislation and guidance should not be underestimated. Alongside increased registration activity during the statutory period, the scale of the work is detailed below:

Local Elections

- 97 polling stations were booked
- Borough Elections – 155 Nominations (1550 assenters)
- Parish Elections - 124 nominations (248 assenters)
- 66 agents were appointed
- 447 staff were appointed to 1085 jobs
- 34,855 postal ballot packs were issued and 22,599 were receipted and opened and processed
- 1,834 postal votes were returned on polling day which included 227 in the final Royal Mail sweep which all had to be opened and processed for verification as soon as possible after 10pm
- Turnout 33%

European Parliamentary Election

- 97 polling stations were booked
- 408 staff were appointed to 978 jobs
- 35,015 postal ballot packs were issued and 20,941 were receipted and opened representing an unprecedented 86% turnout of postal voters
- 1,609 postal votes were returned on polling day which included 180 in the final royal mail sweep which all had to be opened and processed for verification as soon as possible after 10pm
- Turnout 32%

Despite some issues, the 2019 polls at Stockton were delivered successfully. Clear leadership, effective team working and project management enabled a timely and planned approach to delivery including positive working relationships with partners and suppliers and thereby achieving successful election outcomes. Clear roles and good communications continued to contribute to this success and would stand the Council in good stead for future elections.

Regular meetings were held in the region and sub region particularly in the early planning stages. These meetings and good communication with the Electoral Commission and Association of Electoral Administrators continued to be invaluable in sharing ideas and best practice.

The next scheduled elections would be the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections and Tees Valley Mayoral Elections in May 2020. Stockton would again be the lead for these elections and preliminary planning work had commenced. It was proposed to hold the counts on Friday 8 May and Saturday 9 May however this may need to be reviewed following the decision to move the May Day Bank Holiday to the Friday to mark VE Day.

**CAB
19/19**

Canvass Reform

On 12 March 2019, the Cabinet Office published an interim statement of policy regarding reform of the canvass. The Government would be amending legislation governing the annual canvass with canvass reform implemented from the start of the 2020 annual canvass. The report set out existing and new arrangements and the implications of the changes.

With regard to the impact of the changes there would be significant impact on business processes and updates required to the Electoral Management Software.

There would also need to be consideration of how the changes might impact on registration levels. For example, it was anticipated that attainer registration would dip as a result of the changes. The resources that were freed up as part of canvass reform would need to be re-directed not only to non-matched properties but also to boost registration levels in under-registered groups.

In advance of canvass reform, it was essential that all UPRNs were up to date in the electoral register. The electoral team regularly update this information. In addition, property data had been sent to GIS team for matching against ONS records. Any anomalies would be investigated and corrected. This exercise would ensure that all properties were in their correct polling district ahead of sending data for matching.

Other activities included cleansing of data (including the deletion of outdated potential and pending electors), reviewing data sharing agreements with local data holders, the identification of properties that would be canvassed under Route 3 and determining the timescale for electors to be excluded from the data match step where they had recently registered.

CAB Xentrall Annual Report 18-19

20/19

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

The annual report allowed Members to review the progress and performance of Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership.

The Annual Report demonstrated how Xentrall had delivered savings across the board whilst continuing to improve performance and customer satisfaction.

Key in year achievements included; The implementation phase of a new HR system which delivered efficiencies through mobility, the facility for recurring credit / debit card billing in Finance which made the Council easier to do business with, many successfully implemented high-profile campaigns from Design and Print and the improvement ICT systems to defend against the increasing threat from cyber-attacks.

Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership, was established in May 2008 and was in its twelfth year. The Xentrall services covered:

- 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 of the partnership. The successful partnership had delivered all these plus additional efficiencies and benefits and had achieved £14.6m of savings. At the same time the quality and performance of services had improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing over the life of the partnership.

This significant achievement for what was a public / public partnership compared very well to other private sector partnerships many of which had failed over the same period. A report published in May by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) reflected this in-house approach as their survey found that over 77% of respondent councils, had or were considering insourcing a service with over 61% of these doing so to improve efficiency. The foresight by both Councils at that time in setting up Xentrall was ambitious, but both had since enjoyed the financial and service rewards of a successful on-going partnership.

In recognition the on-going success of this public / public partnership, Members were reminded that in 2015 they agreed to amend the original ten-year period into an on-going rolling agreement, which continues to this day.

**CAB
21/19**

An Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years

Consideration was given to a report on the Investment Strategy for Schools, SEN and Early Years.

A report was presented to Cabinet in September 2017 which proposed a strategy for investing in Schools, Early Years and Special Education Needs &

Disabilities (SEND). This addressed capacity issues and improvements using funding allocated to the Council. In total £37.2m was allocated from Basic Need. The Council had subsequently been notified of a further funding allocation of £7.5m for 2020/2021 bringing total Basic Need funding to £44.7m. The report provided an update on works delivered to date, and recommends further proposals for a range of schools and establishments including academies and diocesan schools.

The Council had been allocated and would have received a total of £37m as part of Government allocations for School Basic Needs funding by the end of 2019/20 with a further allocation of £7.5m to come in 2020/21. Although this was intended for shortages in school places it was not ring fenced and it had previously been approved to support an ambitious programme of improvements across the Borough to address suitability and condition where needed.

In addition there were a number of Developer contributions specifically for education expected linked to housing growth, whilst timescales were difficult to plan, this strategy takes account of developments and Section 106 contributions agreed.

Due to Primary School capacity being addressed in recent years, this investment plan focused mainly on Secondary schools, pre-school and SEND provision.

The investment plan was a significant opportunity to ensure a number of proposals associated with Academies and Diocesan schools were supported with some additional contributions from the schools also. This demonstrated the Council's commitment to support Education improvement, development and achievement irrespective of the Governance of the school.

RESOLVED that the revised programme be approved outlined in paragraph 27 of the report detailing allocation of £52.2m of which £44.7m is Basic Need funding with other contributions of £7.5m.

CAB 22/19 Sport & Active Leisure Strategy

Consideration was given to a report on the Sport & Active Leisure Strategy.

The Council continued to invest in facilities and programmes that encouraged people to participate in sport and active leisure to support their health and wellbeing. The provision incorporated universal services, available to all residents, alongside targeted services aimed at helping those with particular needs or barriers to achieving healthy lifestyles.

These services and facilities contribute to the achievement of the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy objectives and were set within the Physical Activity Strategic Framework, developed and adopted by the Joint Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Sport and Active Leisure strategy set out the range of general and targeted provision which the Council believed represent the appropriate balance, informed by the principle of proportionate universalism.

RESOLVED that the Sport & Active Leisure Strategy 2019 – 2022 be approved.

**CAB
23/19**

Stockton on Tees Visitors Economy Strategy 2019 - 2025

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton on Tees Visitors Economy Strategy 2019 – 2025.

Tourism plays a relatively small but important part in the local economy. Stockton's events and attractions, including the River Tees and the Barrage, were important parts of the local and Tees Valley tourism offer. The Tees Valley Combined Authority had created in the Enjoy Tees Valley brand, website and tourism promotion service. 'Enjoy Tees Valley' increased the potential reach and pull of Stockton's visitor offer and could help us attract more visitors from further afield. The development of a complementary sub-set of 'Enjoy Stockton on Tees' campaigns and packages would feed into and derive benefit from the Enjoy Tees Valley activity.

The use of the 'Enjoy' logo and branding would align Stockton's overall tourism promotions with the Tees Valley campaigns and brand, however, it was important to note that the identity and ownership of the attractions or events would not change; they would still be recognised as being owned by SBC or partners.

To maximise the potential economic impact for Stockton Borough, the Council also needed to link the products with the supporting tourism economy businesses, such as hotels, and seek to improve transport connectivity and product development. According to data from the STEAM economic impact assessment model, a 1% increase in Stockton's tourism economy could be worth £2.25m per annum.

There would be opportunities for further investment in tourism related activity, building on existing expenditure, but the primary purpose of the strategy was to achieve more with the existing resources, packaging and targeting efforts to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

The clearer alignment of the tourism offer, and more effective promotion of events and cultural attractions, will also contribute to the pursuit of the UK City of Culture status for the Tees Valley in 2025.

The Strategy incorporated a Delivery Plan with a number of more detailed actions and anticipated outputs. This was expected to evolve as more partners become involved.

RESOLVED that the Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy 2019 – 2025 be approved.

**CAB
24/19**

Economic Climate Update

Consideration was given to a report that provided Members with an update on key economic and business announcements regarding the Economic Strategy 2017-2032 and an annual round-up of the Economic Growth Plan 2017-2020.

The Economic Climate Update reports were presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis, however in this instance the report blends both the 'Business' thematic update and the 'Annual Round Up' into one report.

The report was presented in sections as follows:

- i. Economic Updates – summarising key announcements and developments from across the sector, business intentions and investment, and skills announcements.
- ii. Economic Growth Indicators Update – presents the latest position in relation to the seven indicators of growth for Stockton-on-Tees comparing to the national and regional position. Context is provided through analysis of the longer-term trends associated with each indicator.
- iii. 'Why Stockton-on-Tees is attractive for businesses' – Exploration of the factors that make Stockton-on-Tees a positive environment for businesses.

These included:

- Over £45million of investment in 2018/19
- Over a third (£4.4 Billion) of the £12.6 Billion Tees Valley GVA comes from Stockton on Tees
- 25.4% growth in businesses in Stockton-On-Tees
- Stockton-on-Tees has a higher concentration of specialised jobs and businesses (including chemicals and process, scientific research and logistics)
- Stockton-on-Tees has a highly skilled workforce with an estimated 42,400 residents qualified to NVQ Level 4 and above

Due to the Economic Strategy and Growth Plan being reviewed this would be the last time that Members would receive the Economic Climate Update in this format.

**CAB
25/19**

Victoria Estate Redevelopment Update

Consideration was given to a report on the Victoria Estate Redevelopment.

In September 2018 Cabinet granted approval to appoint Keepmoat Homes Limited as the Councils Joint Venture Partner to successfully bring forward a contemporary and exciting new housing on the Victoria estate, a development which would provide both inclusive and adaptable homes in a quality, green, landscaped environment. Since this time significant progress had been made in processing both the development and the formal legal arrangements. During these discussions both parties had agreed that an alternative legal arrangement, a Collaboration Agreement, would provide a more cost-effective structure than the establishment of a Joint Venture Company.

Subject to securing necessary planning and approvals detailed within the report, the table below provides an indicative site development timeline:

Secure planning consent - Mid July 2019

Collaboration Agreement and all supported legal documents signed - End July 2019

Site preparatory works / building works commence - Early October 2019

Sales Centre opens - March 2020

First legal completions - May 2020

Overall scheme completion - June 2023

Over recent months Council representatives had met with Keepmoat to progress the legal structure and during these discussions an alternative legal arrangement had been highlighted - a Collaboration Agreement. The Collaboration Agreement proposed was a simplified legal structure which would not require the expense incurred in setting up a new company however it would still ensure that the Councils stated objectives were achieved. Details of the proposed new legal structure were detailed within the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposed new legal arrangements as detailed in paragraph 9 of the report be approved.

Subject to the above:

2. Delegated authority be given to the Directors of HR, Legal and Communications, Economic Growth and Development and Finance and Business in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing to determine the terms of the new legal arrangements, enter into the Collaboration Agreement and all new legal documentation required to deliver the partnership and redevelopment scheme and finalise the terms of the land sale.

**CAB
26/19**

Armed Forces Community Covenant Update

Consideration was given to a report on the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The report detailed the position and progress made by the Council in relation to fulfilling the commitments made in the updated Armed Forces Community Covenant, which was adopted in October 2018.

It considered the vital role of the Council's Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group; the latest Stock Take regarding delivery of the Covenant 'Pillars'; the priorities of 2019/20 Covenant Action Plan; the relevant issues from the Defence Secretary's November 2018 Covenant report to Parliament; and the progress towards achieving the 'Gold' award from the MOD Employer Recognition Scheme.

Members were asked to note the contents of the report and the significant

progress that was being made by the Council in fulfilling its commitments to the armed forces community, and the innovative way that this had been achieved primarily through the establishment and development of the pioneering Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group.

In order to ensure that the Covenant related activities and initiatives remained current and continue to support the local AF community, the Council would need to:

- continue to support the ongoing work of the Covenant Steering Group to review and update the Covenant Action Plan and carry out the annual Stock take of the covenant pillars;
- continue to monitoring and implementing appropriate responses to the information, guidance, research and reports provided through the various defence e-bulletins, e-newsletters and websites; and the Defence Secretary's annual report to Parliament;

By doing this the Council would be able to retain the Silver Award from the MOD ERS; maintain progress towards the Gold Award; and continue working towards and maintaining a 'green' rating for delivery of the Covenant pillars.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- 1. The contents of the report and the significant progress that is being made by the Council in fulfilling its commitments to the armed forces community as set out in the new Armed Forces Community Covenant as signed in November 2018 be noted.**
- 2. The key areas of focus for the coming year as detailed in the report be agreed.**