

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 21st January, 2021.

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

Officers: Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Nigel Hart , Leanne Maloney-Kelly, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Sarah Whaley, Gary Woods (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Garry Cummings, Ant Phillips, Lisa Tague,(F,D&BS), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Jamie McCann (CS), Ann Workman (AH).

Also in attendance: Cllrs Louise Baldock, Pauline Beall, Carol Clark, Clare Gamble, Lynn Hall, Tony Riordan and Norma Stephenson.

Apologies: None

CAB 45/20 **Declarations of Interest**

All members of Cabinet declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled 'Members Allowance Scheme-Report of Independent Remuneration Panel' being recipients of allowances currently paid under the Members Allowance Scheme.

Councillor McCoy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled Census 2021 as a result of her being a member of SDAIS who were involved in a contract arrangement with the ONS.

CAB 46/20 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th December 2020 - For Signature/Approval**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th December 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

CAB 47/20 **Census 2021**

Cabinet noted the work undertaken by the Census Liaison Manager (CLM) and census officer group, working with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to support plans and preparation ahead of the next census day 21 March 2021.

The census was a unique survey of all people and households in England and Wales that happens every 10 years. The census collects in-depth information about us and the society we live in. It informs us of our current and future needs and helps local authorities plan public services.

Cabinet were also asked to approve the local authority partnership plan (LAPP) which forms the blueprint for census activity and delegate approval for any further minor amendments to the plan to the Assistant Director of Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Local Area Partnership Plan (LAPP) and delegates approval for any further minor amendments to the plan to the Assistant Director of Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services in

consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**CAB
48/20** **Financial Update and Medium Term Financial Plan**

Cabinet noted outline plans for the 2021/22 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) based on information provided in the Spending Review and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

The financial position for subsequent years was extremely uncertain, and as previously outlined to Members, would be affected by a further Government Spending Review, a potential Fair Funding Review and proposals around Business Rates Retention.

Based on the assumptions in the report, and subject to decisions on Council Tax levels, it was anticipated that the Council would have a broadly balanced MTFP.

The report to Cabinet and subsequently Council in February would update the position and make final recommendations regarding Council Tax.

RESOLVED that the emerging issues for the MTFP be noted.

**CAB
49/20** **Procurement Plan / Higher Value Contracts**

Approval was sought from Cabinet for the award of a planned higher value contract, where the value exceeded the limit on officer delegated authority, and which were either funded within the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) or were subject to a bid for external funding.

The Council's Constitution defined a range of decisions that required specific Cabinet approval, the financial threshold for which was set at a level of £500k or more. Cabinet were provided with details of a procurement project over £500k that was currently underway and due for contract award. The value of the contract each exceeded the financial threshold and had therefore not been delegated to officers.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet approves the contract listed in Annex 1 of the report;
2. Cabinet delegates authority to the relevant Director or Assistant Director to make the specific contract award decisions and any subsequent contract variation and extension decisions in accordance with the delegations listed in Annex 1.

**CAB
50/20** **Indigenous Growth Fund Update**

Cabinet were provided with an update on the Tees Valley Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF) along with a proposed IGF Strategic Initiatives Programme to stimulate inward investment, support economic growth, and be a catalyst for job creation across the Borough using the IGF that the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) had allocated to the Council.

The TVCA Investment Plan allocated £50m to the IGF, a programme developed to support the Strategic Economic Plan objective to develop 'Place' through area regeneration in support of economic growth. The fund provided capital support to the five Local Authorities for a range of interventions including:

- remediation/regeneration of vacant and derelict land and property;
- public realm initiatives aimed at creating vibrant town centres;
- strategic housing initiatives aimed at creating vibrant town centres;
- investment specialist culture and tourism accommodation
- investment in the provision of specialist (sector specific) business accommodation and fit-out.
- Operating costs for discrete programmes designed to support associated capital expenditure.

A Programme Business Case had been approved by TVCA Cabinet and the five Local Authorities were now developing proposals for individual projects.

For Stockton, our aim was to support people and encourage business growth as well as public and private investment that further strengthened the performance of Stockton-on-Tees as a thriving and productive Borough. This is fuelled by the Borough's key employment locations such as Wynyard Business Park, Durham Lane and Teesside Industrial Estates and Belasis Business Park as well as the major industrial areas of North Tees and Seal Sands each home to major international business specialising in petro-chemicals, energy, biotechnologies and advanced manufacturing. Alongside these specialist business incubation facilities such as Fusion Hive on North Shore serve the emerging digital and creative sector.

The report set out the opportunities for investment across a number of activities and outlined the next steps including some early inward investment opportunities.

Approval from Cabinet was sought for the activities identified within the IGF Strategic Initiatives Programme, and for the forward funding of highway infrastructure works to support an inward investment opportunity within the Borough.

In addition and as part of this programme of initiatives, the Council had been approached regarding an inward investment opportunity within the Borough that had the potential to create circa 300 jobs. To unlock this strategic employment land there was a need to forward fund £2.25m of highway junction improvements, the details of which were summarised.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet approve the IGF Strategic Initiatives Programme and note the the allocation of resources from the Indigenous Growth Fund.
2. Cabinet approve the forward funding of £2.25m highway junction improvements as part of the IGF Strategic Initiatives Programme with a condition that a proportion of that forward fund is recovered through planning S106 contributions for the site.
3. Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Development and Business Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council for expenditure of the Indigenous Growth Fund for interventions identified in the 'Programme' up to £1m in value.
4. Cabinet note that individual interventions identified in 'Programme' over £1m in value and in addition to recommendation 2, will be brought back to future Cabinet meetings for approval.

CAB 51/20 The Sycamores Redevelopment Update and Proposals for Elm House Site

Cabinet were provided with an update on the development of 'The Sycamores' housing scheme and provided with an overview of the Brownfield Fund (aimed at bringing stalled sites forward for housing development) and the proposal currently being developed with Keepmoat Homes Limited to bid into this Fund to bring forward the Elm House site.

Members were reminded that following an extensive procurement process, Keepmoat Homes Limited were appointed as the Councils partner to bring forward the development of the Victoria estate. Despite the on-site challenges and the financial uncertainty faced by house builders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, significant progress has been made as follows:-

-The Show Home was officially opened in October 2020 by Richard Kilty (Olympic athlete and former resident of the site). The opening attracted media interest and was featured on BBC Look North;

-21 properties had been built to date. This included the first phase of 13 affordable homes which would be owned and managed by Thirteen. These homes were currently being advertised on Compass (the Tees Valley Common Allocation system) and would be occupied imminently;

-In total 17 properties had been reserved / sold and building works had now commenced on a further phase of the development;

-Following agreement between Keepmoat Homes, the Council and Thirteen, the percentage of affordable housing on the site over the term of the development would increase from 15% (22 units) to 22% (as Thirteen had purchased a further 9 units);

-To ensure that the development was inclusive, homes are available for outright sale, affordable home ownership and affordable rent. In addition, the Help to Buy scheme was also available for potential property purchases. Help to Buy is a Government backed equity loan scheme which assists eligible households buy a home with a 5% deposit. This is in addition to other incentive packages offered by Keepmoat to help those seeking to purchase a home (i.e. the 'Easymove' scheme which helps residents pay their estate agent fees if they have their own home to sell);

-In addition to building new homes, Keepmoat are committed to delivering a range of social value measures during the lifetime of the scheme. By way of an example Keepmoat have worked with a local primary school and will be installing an outside play area (unfortunately due to the current pandemic work has been delayed until 2021).

As highlighted in previous Cabinet reports, it had always been the Councils ambition to bring forward the Elm House site with a scheme which would complement The Sycamores. Unfortunately, site investigations have identified that remediation costs are significant and have to date proved to be cost prohibitive to future development.

The Government had recently announced the 'Brownfield Fund' (the 'Fund') which is overseen by Combined Authorities and aimed at supporting a range of financial interventions to enable the development of brownfield land which would otherwise not happen. Eligible expenditure includes; site remediation (including demolition) to prepare sites for housing, enabling infrastructure, site acquisition and land assembly. Authorities were obliged to seek the best possible Value for Money opportunities.

The Tees Valley local authorities had therefore been working with the TVCA to identify a range of potential schemes which can be delivered during the Fund period (2000/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23). As Members will appreciate, there has been a particular emphasis placed on identifying those schemes which are eligible and can make a year 1 start (2020/21). The Council had identified the Elm House site as a year 1 scheme and over recent weeks officers had been working to develop a Business Case which met the Fund criteria. The proposed scheme was for 14 bungalows which would be made available for affordable rent.

In order to bring this site forward within the required timelines, it was proposed to revise the terms of the current Victoria Site Collaboration Agreement with Keepmoat Homes Limited enabling the site to be included within the Agreement. The advantage of this approach is that it would allow Keepmoat Homes to mobilise quickly, with a start on site this financial year. It also ensured that the bungalow development would complement The Sycamores (as one builder) and the Council (who will make the Fund application) will be working with an existing, trusted partner. In addition, Keepmoat (on behalf of the joint partners) have been in negotiations with a Registered Provider who have committed to purchase the 14 bungalows.

Cabinet approval was sought to delegate authority to the Directors of HR, Legal and Communications and Finance, Development and Business in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing, to determine the necessary revisions to the existing (SBC/Keepmoat) Collaboration Agreement and enter into any new legal documentation which may be required to bring forward the Elm House site.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet note the purpose/remit of the Governments Brownfield Fund and support ongoing work to secure Brownfield Fund monies which will accelerate brownfield housing developments across the borough.
2. Cabinet approve the commencement of site remediation and development preparation in respect of the Elm House site and the indemnification of Keepmoat [to an agreed capped level] for the costs incurred.
3. Cabinet delegate authority to the Directors of HR, Legal and Communications and Finance, Development and Business in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing to determine the necessary revisions to the Collaboration Agreement and enter into any new legal documentation required to bring forward the redevelopment of the Elm House site.

**CAB
52/20** **Local Land Charges Migration**

Cabinet was advised that Stockton was to be the first North East Local Authority to migrate our Local Land Charges Register to HM Land Registry after working very closely with them on a programme of work which officially started in January 2020.

The migration has provided an opportunity to make our processes more efficient, improve the quality of our data and modernise the service so that we can improve the service for our residents and customers.

It was anticipated that HM Land Registry would formally give the Council 4 weeks notice of the transfer shortly with the actual transfer of the Register data going live from the end of February 2021.

As a result of the success of the programme the Council had been asked to attend and present at HM Land Registry national conference events together with providing information for a blog which has been added to the HM Land Registry website.

**CAB
53/20** **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 to members for consideration:-

Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board - 22nd October 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes detailed in the Appendix of the report be received.

CAB 54/20 Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses

Consideration was given to the final report that presented the outcome of the Crime & Disorder Select Committee review of Fly-Grazed Horses.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cleveland Police, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and other relevant partners, in conjunction with any other interested Tees Valley Local Authorities, develop a joint formal policy document to address the fly-grazing of horses on both Council and non-Council land, clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of the relevant organisations.
2. The agreed joint formal policy is made publicly available, with specific awareness-raising work undertaken with local horse-owners.
3. There is improved presence (e.g. dedicated webpage) on the Council website around the issue of fly-grazed horses, including key (non-personal) contacts (Council and other partners) / links to guidance / tips for landowners / formal policy (once finalised), etc.
4. Where identified, SBC continue to work with landowners (particularly those previously / currently affected by this issue) to reinforce their rights and obligations, as well as avenues of wider support and guidance.
5. Further investigation of potential Council land for a licenced grazing pilot scheme be undertaken as part of the wider SBC Asset Review (ensuring input from the Council's Environmental Health department).
6. Relevant SBC departments identify specific areas of Council land requiring a zero-tolerance approach based on location alone, along with an assessment of the resources required to support the enforcement of the new formal policy on these pieces of land and any other land where a horse's presence poses an identified risk.
7. Consideration be given to arranging a future microchipping clinic in the Borough (in conjunction with the British Horse Society).
8. An Officer network group to encourage regular collaboration (including the sharing of best practice around this issue) between the Council and relevant partners regarding fly-grazed horses be created.

CAB 55/20 Place Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Planters in Residential Streets (Task and Finish)

Consideration was given to the final report that presented the outcome of the Place Select Committee Task & Finish Scrutiny Review of Planters.

RESOLVED that:-

1. In line with usual practice, SBC continue to maintain the structure of planters, where repairs are needed, and any proposals to remove planters, following consultation with local residents, be considered on a case by case basis together with funding options.

2. Residents and community groups be invited to take on the role of coordinating and/or pilot planting through approaches to organisations such as:

- Cultivate Tees Valley, Shaw Trust, Billingham Environmental Link Programme (BELP), and other community gardening groups
- Tenants and Residents Associations
- Residents who are allotment holders or are on allotment waiting lists
- Councillors and Residents
- Community Partnerships
- BMBF, schools, and youth organisations

3. Town and Parish Councils are asked whether they would be interested in taking on responsibility for any planters in their areas.

4. Housing Associations are asked whether they would be interested in taking on responsibility for planters in areas where they have stock.

5. Local businesses are encouraged to sponsor planters or provide materials or funding.

6. Interested residents and groups be encouraged to:

- a. Consider the longer-term maintenance and funding strategies and low maintenance planting schemes, such as wildflowers;
- b. Consider the repurposing of planters, for example, as benches/seating
- c. Work with local ward Councillors to consult the local community and encourage their involvement ;

7. Following Cabinet approval, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group present the final report to the new Community Partnerships to seek interest from residents and groups;

8. Interested parties be signposted to Catalyst's Grantfinder Database;

9. Community Services provide advice, guidance and appropriate support to interested individuals as part of approving planting schemes;

10. Opportunities are publicised with a view to seeking interest from individuals and groups and that successful pilot initiatives be publicised to encourage more interest;

11.The inclusion of planters in residential settings should not be supported in future developments unless long term funding for their upkeep is identified and secured.

CAB 56/20 Members Allowance Scheme - Report of Independent Remuneration Panel

Cabinet were provided with details of the Independent Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel's report with a view to making any recommendations for the Council's Members Allowance Scheme for 2021/22.

The rationale in respect of the proposed increase of the Councillors basic allowance was summarised, along with the rationale behind the proposed re-balancing of the Chair/Vice Chair SRA allowance.

Subject to any recommendations Cabinet wished to make, Council would consider the proposals within the Independent Remuneration Panel report at its meeting on the 27 January 2021.

RECOMMENDED to Council that there be no changes made to the Council's Members Allowance Scheme for 2021/22.

CAB 57/20 Supplementary Planning Document Adoption – SPD No.1 - Housing Supplementary Planning Document and SPD No.2 - Householder Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document

Cabinet noted that Supplementary Planning Documents No.1 - Housing Supplementary Planning Document and No.2 - Householder Extensions and Alterations were presented to the Council's Planning Committee on 11th March 2020 to provide comments for Cabinet to consider. The SPDs were also endorsed by Cabinet on the 19th March 2020 who recommended that Council adopt the documents. However, the subsequent Council meeting was cancelled following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cabinet noted that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provided guidance on how Local Plan policies are applied and were a material consideration when determining applications for planning permission within the Borough. Two SPDs, the Housing SPD and Householder Extensions and Alterations SPD have been published for public consultation. In order to address the comments raised during the consultation, the documents have been amended where appropriate.

The SPDs (Appendix A and B), the Communities Impact Assessments (Appendix C) Consultation Statement (Appendix D) and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (Appendix E), were available on the Council's internet e-genda system and in the Members Library. The Consultation Statement includes the schedule of comments received during the consultation period on the draft versions of the SPD, alongside the Council's response.

Cabinet was invited to note that Council was now recommended to adopt these documents at its meeting on 27th January 2021 so that they can be used in the determination of planning applications. However, further to an amendment to the Cabinet report, the documents will only be applied to new planning applications which are submitted following adoption of these Supplementary Planning Documents.

Council are also recommended to approve the adoption of these documents as Council policy, subject to minor editing and changes that are be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and the Director of Finance and Business Services.

RECOMMENDED that Council at its meeting on 27th January 2021 consider the following:-

- 1. Council notes the contents of the report.**
- 2. Council adopt SPD No.1 Housing Supplementary Planning Document and SPD No.2 Householder Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document; and**
- 3. Council delegate the authority to approve non-material and minor alterations to the SPDs to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing, and the Director of Finance and Business Services, prior to publication.**
- 4. Council note that if the new SPDs are adopted, that the existing SPD2 Householder Extension Guide, SPG 4 High Density Development: Flats and Apartments and SPD 8 Affordable Housing will apply to those planning applications current and valid on the date of adoption. Once those applications have been determined those SPDs will be superseded and replaced. The new SPD 1 and 2 will immediately apply to those planning applications received after the date of adoption.**