

## Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 14th October, 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, (MD), Beccy Brown, Jonathan Nertney (HR&L), Martin Gray (CHS), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Ann Workman (AH).

**Also in attendance:** Cllrs Clark and Stephenson O.B.E.

**Apologies:** None

### **CAB 36/21** Evacuation Procedure

### **CAB 37/21** Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the item entitled Minutes of Various Bodies as a result of being a member of Tees Valley Combined Authority, referred to within the report.

### **CAB 38/21** Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th September 2021-For Approval/Signature

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th September 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **CAB 39/21** A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees: A Strategic Framework for Reducing Inequalities in the Borough

Cabinet approval was sought for the final draft of the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees strategic framework following the period of engagement initiatives after the presentation of the framework to Cabinet in July 2021.

The framework outlined:

- a) The key causes of inequality, based on analysis of available research, with the key focus on income, wealth and power;
- b) The basis of a strategic approach, recognising the need to take action across strategy, interventions, practice and for the Council as a major employer, commissioner, provider.

The strategic framework set out a vision and ambition for reducing inequality over the next ten years. To realise the ambition outlined in the framework, it identified five key interventions as follows:-

- a) Tackling fundamental issues across the borough as a whole;
- b) A focus on reducing the inequalities faced by identified disadvantaged communities;
- c) A focus on deprived neighbourhoods, and in particular building on the

work in the Targeted Action Areas, focusing on these areas as the first area priorities;

- d) A focus on the most marginalized;
- e) An emphasis on the Council as a major employer, commissioner and purchaser.

The framework included a proposed governance and accountability structure, and an engagement plan, the details of which were summarised.

The next steps for development of the framework will be led by two temporary posts of coordinator who have now been recruited to, who's primary role would be to develop the business plan for the framework for 2021/22 and beyond as follows :-

- a. To define specific elements of borough wide intervention and the delivery mechanisms for these;
- b. To work with colleagues to update and refresh the JSNA sections relevant to the work with disadvantaged communities;
- c. To refine the proposals for the deprived areas. At this stage, it is proposed that 3 initial priority areas be identified, based on further analysis of IMD data;
- d. To lead the development of proposals for working with the most marginalised individuals
- e. To develop the action plan for the Council as an organisation
- f. To establish the multi-agency steering group.
- g. To identify the resource requirements for future year's delivery.

An impact assessment would be undertaken on an annual basis and members requested that this include the impact of national policy/issues such as the removal of Universal Credit, increasing energy prices, job losses and and the consequent effect on peoples health and wellbeing.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Agree the final draft of the strategic framework for Reducing Inequalities in the Borough;
2. Note the feedback on the framework to date;
3. Note the proposed next steps;
4. Agree to receive an annual report on progress.

**CAB  
40/21**

### **Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) – Annual Update**

Cabinet received an update on the Council's position in relation to fulfilling its Armed Forces Covenant commitments for the 2020/21 financial year. The report concluded the annual 'cycle' of monitoring these commitments, and setting out the focus for the coming year.

The report highlighted:

- i). the main focus during 2020/21 with examples of progress that has been made;
- ii). references from the Defence Secretary's 2020 Covenant report to Parliament;
- iii). the outcome of our latest Stock Take self-assessment for 2020/21;
- iv). new national initiatives to support the military community;
- v). the main focus of activities for 2021/22; and
- vi). the outcome of the submission to the MOD Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) to be considered for their prestigious 'Gold' Award in 2021.

In the 2019/20 Stock Take, all the pillars of our AFC were again rated 'green'. The key area of focus for 2020/21 was to identify / implement relevant actions to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 on planned activities and events – including Armed Forces Week, the 75th anniversaries of Victory in Europe (VE Day) and Victory over Japan (VJ Day); and Remembrance Sunday – encouraging the public to participate from home utilising a variety of online content and videos.

In addition, we continued building on the excellent progress made around 'Transition'; and strengthening our role as a champion advocate of the armed forces community:

- i. Raising awareness of the Covenant to all 16 of our town and parish councils, and encouraged them to declare their support for the armed forces by signing their own Covenant – 4 have done so and 4 others plan to.
- ii. Promoting the Covenant to our GP Practice Manager Network led to 4 more being accredited as a 'Veteran-Friendly GP Practices' – taking the total to 13.
- iii. Having introduced our Veterans' Guaranteed Interview Scheme encouraging applications for council vacancies from service leavers, we liaised with Forces Families Jobs to create a profile on their website and began promoting our vacancies to the families of those serving.

At the end of March this year, we completed our submission to the MOD to be considered for the 'Gold' Award in their Employer Recognition Scheme – highlighting these initiatives as additional evidence of our commitment to the armed forces community. In July it was hugely satisfying when the Council was contacted by the MOD to confirm that we were one of four north east organisations judged to be meeting the criteria for the 2021 Gold Award – the highest level of recognition organisations can achieve, having proven their commitment and support to the Defence community.

The Defence Secretary's annual report referred to plans and priorities for 2021 and beyond which will also be relevant to our future Covenant delivery:

i. To mark the Covenant's tenth anniversary by fulfilling a manifesto promise to further incorporate the Covenant into law – in order to help prevent disadvantage faced by the Armed Forces community due to the unique nature of their service. This has been set in motion through the 2021 Armed Forces Bill, which is making its way through Parliament.

ii. The Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA) was established in the Cabinet Office in 2019 to champion veterans and their families at the heart of government. It seeks to ensure the delivery of life-long support to veterans by providing enhanced leadership, improved use of data and better co-ordination of policies and services across government – as well as driving forward the realisation of the 'Strategy for our Veterans' and its ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran. The 2020-2022 Action Plan to deliver the strategy is currently being reviewed and updated to cover the period 2022-24.

iii. The Covenant report also referenced the "Living in Our Shoes" report by Andrew Selous MP, and the increased understanding this has provided about the diversity of Armed Forces families and their needs. His recommendations are to be used in the refresh of the "Armed Forces Families Strategy".

The main focus for our activities in 2021/22 will be on the priorities outlined from the national Covenant report – contributing to the review and update of the 2022-24 Action Plan for the 'Strategy for our Veterans'; implementing relevant recommendations from the 'In our Shoes' report; and most importantly, monitoring and implementing the requirements of the Armed Forces Bill in preparation for it becoming law.

The Bill was introduced in January 2021. Its primary purpose is to renew the Armed Forces Act 2006 (itself renewed by the Armed Forces Acts of 2011 and 2016) for a further 5 years. The Bill is expected to become law in early 2022.

The key aspect of the Bill with regard to the Council, is 'Clause 8' – a proposal to impose a statutory duty on specified public bodies to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, as follows:

(a) the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces;

(b) the principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service personnel from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces; and

(c) the principle that special provision for Service personnel may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.

The new duty will apply to specified persons or bodies (such as local authorities) in the areas of housing, education or healthcare.

The MOD and Cabinet Office are due to provide draft guidance about this statutory duty in October and then Councils will have the opportunity to take part in focus groups to ensure that it is clear what the duty requires and how we

would be expected to comply with it.

**CAB  
41/21**      **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:-

- Tees Valley Combined Authority - 2nd July 2021;
- Safer Stockton Partnership - 7th July 2021;
- Tees Adult Safeguarding Board - 2nd September 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings detailed above be received.

**CAB  
42/21**      **Adult Social Care Strategy**

Cabinet approval was sought for the Adult Social Care Strategy 2021-2025 which set out the vision and aspirations for adult social care.

Its main focus was on ensuring that people can get the right level and type of support at the right time to help, prevent, reduce or delay the need for on-going support and maximise independence.

The Strategy described the responsibilities the Council has in the provision of adult social care and how the Council discharges its duties. It also identified the importance of connection with other Council strategies and key stakeholders and described the consultation that occurred in the development of the Strategy. Most importantly, it affirmed that fundamental to everything that we do in adult social care, was having the person we are providing care for at the centre of our care with their wellbeing and their welfare our priority.

Four key priorities were identified within the strategy as follows:

- Priority One – To provide support to people to prevent, reduce or delay the need for on-going support and to maximise their independence;
- Priority Two - To ensure people can get the right level and type of support at the right time;
- Priority Three – To develop and support our staff and to support providers of adult social care to develop and support their staff;
- Priority Four – To work with, and within, communities.

RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care Strategy 2021-25 be approved.