

## Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 20th January, 2022.

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

**Officers:** Julie Danks, Margaret Waggott, Nigel Hart, Judith Trainer (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher (HR&L), Ian Coxon (CHS), Jamie McCann, Andrew Corcoran, Simon Milner (CS&T), Reuben Kench (CL&E), Ann Workman (AH).

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Chris Barlow , Cllr Pauline Beall , Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Marilyn Surtees.

**Apologies:** None

**CAB 61/21 Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation procedure was noted.

**CAB 62/21 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Smith declared a non-registerable interest in respect of the item entitled Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools as a result of a family member being employed within one of the schools referred to in the report.

**CAB 63/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December 2021 - For Approval/Signature**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**CAB 64/21 Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish)**

Consideration was given to the final report that presented the outcome of the Crime & Disorder Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish).

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Any scheduled reviews of Cleveland Police's 'Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025' document factors in the key findings and recommendations from this review;
- 2) As part of the future communications protocol / agreement between Cleveland Police and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Ward Councillors:
  - a) Cleveland Police promotes the need for regular and Ward-specific engagement with SBC Ward Councillors amongst its internal workforce (including the provision of information to Elected Members which is relevant to

their particular Ward);

b) Cleveland Police and SBC use their various public-facing communication platforms to raise the profile of Force-Councillor partnership-working (highlighting examples of positive engagement leading to direct action and good outcomes);

c) Expectations around the physical visibility of police officers (i.e. Ward Surgeries, partnership-meetings, resident meetings) be re-established between Cleveland Police and all SBC Ward Councillors;

d) PCSO contacts for each Ward be reinforced to all SBC Ward Councillors, along with relevant escalation points if a PCSO is unavailable for any reason;

e) Consideration be given to using available platforms to raise the profile of PCSOs and their crucial part in the policing function (providing clarity on what they can and cannot do, including their use of social media as a communication tool);

f) Cleveland Police provides a response to concerns raised within the SBC Ward Councillor survey (undertaken as part of this review), with specific reference to what it is doing to promote better engagement in those Wards where Councillors have expressed dissatisfaction with existing communications arrangements;

3) Cleveland Police ensures robust mechanisms are in place for victims of crime / ASB which:

a) provides clarity on the expected communication process between Force and victim;

b) ensures updates are provided (as regularly as agreed with each individual victim) regarding the progression of investigations, even when there have been no developments;

4) The SBC Ward Councillor survey is repeated in approximately 12 months to gauge developments around Cleveland Police-SBC Ward Councillor communications arrangements.

**CAB  
65/21**

### **Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough**

Consideration was given to the final report that presented the outcome of the People Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Opportunities to share and promote good practice across the Council and wider community are identified;
2. All Directorates be asked to review and demonstrate how disability inclusivity and co-production of services is embedded within their areas;

3. A Disability Inclusion Charter is published to evidence the Council's commitment to being a Disability Inclusive Borough;
4. An Equality Statement is produced setting out the Council's approach and commitment to equality and diversity;
5. An external Equality Information Directory is developed to better inform the public and assist with signposting of services;
6. Improvements are made to the Council's website to support easy navigation to up to date information about current services and future plans;
7. A programme of staff awareness raising is put in place to highlight the different types of disability and how to best serve those with physical and hidden disabilities in order to improve communication and customer service;
8. Additional disability training modules be incorporated in the proposed E-learning management system, due to go live in February 2022 and consideration be given as to how to make disability training procured directly by services more widely available;
9. A publicity campaign is developed to continue to highlight the problems caused by parking over dropped kerbs with opportunities for improvements investigated subject to funding;
10. Engagement of disability groups in the VCSE Adults Forum/ Disability Task and Finish Group, facilitated by Catalyst, be kept under review to ensure that it provides a representative and effective voice for disabled people of the Borough;
11. Lessons learnt from the upcoming refurbishment of the junior/toddlers play area at Preston Park be used to inform future play provision designs with respect to inclusion and accessibility;
12. The provision of changing places toilet facilities be progressed, where practicable, as part the Town Centre Development Programme, subject to funding through the Changing Places Fund;
13. Posters/ cards promoting simple sign phrases are adopted across customer services centres and receptions to assist communication with the deaf community.

**CAB  
66/21**

**Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (including potholes and flooding)**

Consideration was given to the final report that presented the outcome of the Place Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (including potholes and flooding).

RESOLVED that:-

1. Options to utilise, alternative interventions, processes and resources, such as

the use of recycled rubber materials, are considered and where appropriate are implemented both as part of delivering more maintenance interventions and contributing towards the Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy;

2. Options to 'invest to save' are explored and costs and returns are calculated;

3. Options are included, where appropriate, to build on existing collaborative work or procure collaboratively with other Tees Valley authorities to advance innovation, adopt alternative processes and materials, improve efficiency, harmonise standards and maximise integration;

4. A communications plan is devised and agreed to ensure that all elected Members are made aware of the current Highway Infrastructure asset management processes and current pressures experienced by the Service;

5. A proactive programme of gully replacement is considered and implemented based on priority, need and available resource;

6. Recognising that correspondence has been sent to local MPs urging them to lobby Central Government for additional funding, their response and any further actions are kept under review;

7. In order to raise awareness of funding issues, the final scrutiny report is shared with the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Advisory Group.

**CAB  
67/21**      **Annual Procurement Plan/ Higher Value Contracts**

Cabinet approval was sought for the award of award of a planned higher value contract where the value exceeded the limit on officer delegated authority and which was either funded within the approved MTFP/ Capital Programme or was subject to a bid for external funding.

The Council's Constitution defined a range of decisions that required a specific Cabinet approval, the financial threshold for which was set at a level of £500k or more. Details of the known procurement project over £500k that were underway and due for contract award were detailed at Annex 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the contract listed in Annex 1 to the report and gives associated authority to the relevant Director or Assistant Director to make the specific contract award decision and any subsequent contract variation and extension.

**CAB  
68/21**      **Investors in People (IIP) 2021 Reaccreditation**

Cabinet noted that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had been reaccredited with the Investors in People Accredited standard, an award held since 2003.

Investors in People was the UK's leading accreditation for people management and signals a high performing culture and a commitment to employee development and success. The Council had a long history of investing in its employees, building organisational capacity and driving change in the way it works to be able to respond to the evolving challenges and to ensure that the

Council was able to provide excellent services to our residents and businesses within the borough.

The IIP assessment was conducted in November 2021 and involved a combination of face to face and virtual interviews with a wide range of employees and a review of the Council's approach to people management.

Evidence gathered during the assessment provided significant examples of good practice across all Indicators of the Standard and feedback. The stand-out themes were around mutual trust and empowerment; meaningful opportunities for development; and understanding of the needs of stakeholders and communities.

It was particularly pleasing to receive such positive feedback and recognition of the Council's ambition and approach to valuing its workforce, notwithstanding the significant impact the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have and the ongoing financial challenge and change faced over recent years.

**CAB  
69/21**

### **The Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) Bicentenary**

Cabinet was invited to pledge support in principle for proposals developed jointly by this Council and partners to develop a connected set of visitor sites, experiences and interpretation that would become a permanent visitor attraction and mark the bi-centenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025.

The proposal had been developed by Stockton in partnership with, Darlington Borough Council, Tees Valley Combined Authority and Durham County Council working with Historic England, Network Rail, the Friends of SDR and others linking Locomotion Museum in Shildon, Darlington's Rail Heritage Quarter, Preston Hall Museum & Grounds and Stockton's Riverside. The Partnership had commissioned major pieces of work to provide the foundation for the development of the permanent visitor attraction and the promotion of the Bicentenary. These included a full access audit for the length of the line, historic significance and condition surveys of buildings and structures, marketing and interpretation frameworks, feasibility studies into live steam and early locomotive exhibitions, and an authoritative independent Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) to calculate the potential value of the S&DR to the Tees Valley and County Durham.

The 200th anniversary in 2025 was likely to attract visitors from across the world and establish the profile and identity of the S&DR visitor attraction in all its parts, celebrating our heritage, changing perceptions about the area, and driving long term visitor economy growth. The EIA highlighted a potential 13% increase in overnight visits and a 27% increase in international visitors, compared to pre-covid benchmarks. The Bicentenary also offered the opportunity to foster connections between communities in the Tees Valley and County Durham, encouraging pride and optimism, and highlighting the vital role of innovation and entrepreneurialism to our economy now and in the future.

Cabinet noted that much work had already been done to lay foundations for the 2025 activity, but there was a need to increase our capacity to deliver and move from concepts to confirmed programmes. Feasibility studies had been produced for the major strands of work, these included estimates for costs and potential

impacts. Some sources of partner funding were already confirmed but many were still subject to further application and assessment processes. For example, on behalf of the partnership, Darlington Borough Council led an application for National Heritage Lottery Funding (NHLF) for capital investment and community participation work from Stockton to Shildon. This would add considerable capacity to the work of the Friends of Stockton Darlington Railway and provide staff to work with communities in Stockton Borough, Darlington Borough and County Durham. NHLF had recently confirmed stage 1 success for the £2.87m bid.

Details of the draft outline programme to celebrate the bi-centenary were noted which, although not confirmed and subject to the confirmation of resources from across a wide range of stakeholders, was an achievable programme illustrating the potential scale and reach of the bicentenary. The likely cost for the delivery of the programme proposed was in the range of £1.3 - £1.9m and work to secure financial contributions from other agencies was ongoing but it was expected that a provisional allocation c.£1.3m was required as the basis for further work. The identification of appropriate resources would be considered in subsequent Medium Term Financial Plan reports to Cabinet and ultimately Council for approval.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the outline of proposed celebrations of the S&DR Bicentenary and support the identification of resources through the MTFP process.

**CAB  
70/21**      **Customer Service Excellence Annual Review**

Cabinet noted that following a comprehensive review that concluded in October 2021, the Council had received notification that it had successfully retained full certification of Customer Service Excellence, achieving full compliance across all 57 aspects of assessment with compliance plus for 17 elements.

The assessment was very complimentary about the quality of the report and evidence, the energy and enthusiasm of the staff and of the services that the Council has delivered during the pandemic.

Customer Service Excellence is a national quality mark that seeks to reward organisations that demonstrate a customer-focused commitment to all that they do. Certification to the Customer Service Excellence standard is through a rigorous assessment process which includes a review of documents that demonstrate compliance against each element of the standard and an on-site visit to observe practical evidence.

The next 3 year cycle of Customer Service Excellence would begin with a full assessment due to take place in July 2022.

**CAB  
71/21**      **Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2023**

Cabinet approval was sought for admission arrangements the Local Authority (LA) was proposing for entry into both primary (Reception) and secondary (Year 7) schools in September 2023. In order to comply with legislation for admission in September 2023, the report included the co-ordinated timetable, the

Published Admission Number (PAN) for all Primary and Secondary Schools for that year and the LA's proposed Admission Policy (Oversubscription Policy) for Community maintained and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for entry in September 2023.

The new School Admissions Code (The Code) came into force on the 1 September 2021 and outlined the overall principles behind setting admission arrangements which stated that:

'In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated.' (The Code, page 7 paragraph 14)

When changes were proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.' (The Code, page 18 paragraph 1.45)

Cabinet noted that there were no amendments proposed for the September 2023 admission policy which was based on the current 2022/23 version. The LA however still consulted with a range of key partners and stakeholders including Schools, Governing Bodies, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan representatives, parents/carers and the general public.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

1. Approve the proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Secondary, Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, Academies and Free School (points 5-7 and Appendix 1 of the report);
2. Approve the proposed admission numbers for Primary and Secondary schools for September 2023 (points 8-13 and Appendix 2 of the report);
3. Approve the proposed Admission Policy for September 2023 (point 14-16 and Appendix 3 of the report).

**CAB  
72/21**

### **Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles - Review 2021**

Council approval was sought following a review of the Council's Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles. Under the Act, the Authority was required to publish a Statement of Principles that it proposed to apply when exercising its functions under the Act, in the form of a Gambling Policy. This Policy statement must be published every three years.

Cabinet noted that there had been few changes to the draft Gambling Policy as

there had been no legislative changes in the last three years.

The draft Gambling Policy was published for a four-week public consultation. The consultation included stakeholders such as the Gambling Commission, trade associations, licensees, children's services, local residents' groups, responsible authorities including police and public health, and all members. The consultation was also published on the website and a notice was placed on the notice board of all public libraries. No further comments on the draft policy document were received.

**RECOMMENDED that:-**

- 1. Cabinet note the gambling statement of principles which had been reviewed in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 and those comments received during consultation.**
- 2. Cabinet recommend that Council agree the revised statement of principles to come into effect on the 31 January 2022.**