

# Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 14th July, 2022.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook (Chair), Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Lisa Evans , Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Michael Smith and Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E.

**Officers:** Julie Danks (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher, Jonathan Nertney, Judy Trainer, Peter Bell (CS), Tony Montague, Iain Robinson (F,D&R), Reuben Kench (CS,E&C), Ann Workman (A&H), Martin Gray (ChS).

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Chris Barlow (Chair of Place Select Committee), Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair of People Select Committee), Cllr Barry Woodhouse, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Carol Clark.

Ian Miles (Xentrall Shared Services).

**Apologies:** None.

## **CAB 9/22**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **CAB 10/22**      **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

## **CAB 11/22**      **Xentrall Annual Report**

Consideration was given to the Xentrall Annual Report 2021/22.

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.

In the second year of the global pandemic, Xentrall continued to be a critical element in the support of both Councils.

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

- ICT (strategy and operations)
- Transactional HR (payroll, pensions, 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 arrangement had delivered all these plus additional efficiencies and benefits and significant additional savings as

reported to Members over previous years. At the same time the quality and performance of services had not been compromised but improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing over the life of the partnership.

This was a significant achievement for a public/public partnership and it compared very well to other private sector partnerships many of which had failed over the same period or been brought back in-house for a variety of reasons. Both Councils had benefited both financially and through a continued programme of service improvements brought throughout the lifetime of the partnership.

Xentrall continued to explore new opportunities for external business as and when these arise, which was in-line with the partnership's objective of tactically growing the business. Like the one preceding it, 2021/22 had been an unusual year, yet Xentrall HR had taken on nineteen new schools and two new academy trusts and also during the year ICT had assisted the Combined Authority with their office relocation. In addition, existing external customers had been retained and had signed up to new service level agreements for the current year.

Xentrall generated external annual income of over £1m continued to form a significant part of the overall Xentrall financial model and thereby reduce the Xentrall funding required by both Authorities.

Despite the pandemic, Xentrall continued to function successfully and perform well throughout the year. In terms of the pandemic, 2022/23 looks "more normal", but now the war in Ukraine, global shortages and increased costs of some products and rising inflation to contend with. Whatever the next year or two brings, Xentrall services would continue to strive to deliver quality and timely services to both Councils and our external customers and support them as they navigated and responded to these and other emerging challenges that come with public service delivery. Xentrall activities were detailed within the report.

As with previous years, the continual service improvement mentality within Xentrall would be applied to leverage any further service improvements and/or savings for both Councils. Xentrall would also continue to assess new partnering and business opportunities as and when these arise, which fits in with its business plan of tactically growing the business and in turn help to support both Council's Medium-Term Financial Plans.

## **CAB 12/22**      **Medium Term Financial Plan**

Consideration was given to a report on the draft financial performance and position as at 31 March 2022. Members were aware from previous reports that the 2021/22 financial position continued to be impacted by the Covid pandemic.

Overall there was an improvement in the draft outturn 2021/22 financial position compared to that projected at December of around £1.4m. The Report sets out the breakdown but the key reasons were:

- Additional grant and income being received, including Covid 19 Support funding for 2021/22 and the final instalment of the Covid 19 Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation Scheme.

- Some projected pressures were lower than anticipated and additional savings were achieved.

The report highlighted the inflationary pressures currently being experienced by local authorities and set out that these would be considered further in future MTFP update reports.

There was a continued national pressure in respect of Dedicated Schools Grant, specifically in relation to Special Education Needs and Disabilities. For Stockton this had resulted in a cumulative pressure of £5.48m at the end of 2021/22. Statutory guidance was clear that this should be held separately and not funded from the General Fund, and the Council was working on a plan to resolve this position over the medium term and would continue to lobby for additional funding.

The Capital Programme had been updated to incorporate new schemes and reflected those schemes completed as at the financial year end.

RESOLVED that the draft outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the updated Capital Programme be noted.

#### **CAB 13/22** Minutes of Various Bodies

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

Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board – 26 April 2022  
TVCA Cabinet – 11 March 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of various bodies be received.

#### **CAB 14/22** Review of the Council Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy

Consideration was given to a report on the review of the Council's Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy.

The Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy was designed to make sure that everyone knew the overriding principles that the Council's Regulatory Services would apply when carrying out enforcement work. The current version of the Policy was approved by Cabinet in March 2017 and was due for review and renewal.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was required, as part of Government's Regulators' Code, to publish, and keep under review, an Enforcement Policy relating to the activities of its Regulatory Services. The proposed revised policy statement followed a review and consultation exercise carried out in order to update the content of the Policy.

Enforcement, in the context of this Policy, included action aimed at ensuring that

individuals or businesses comply with the law, carried out in the exercise of, or against the background of, delegated statutory powers. This was not limited to formal enforcement action such as prosecution, but included, for example, the provision of advice to aid compliance.

The Enforcement Policy therefore covered all of the Council's Regulatory Services, including Trading Standards, Licensing, Environmental Health, Animal Health, Planning, Building Control and those functions dealing with car parking enforcement, anti-social behaviour, environmental protection, housing and benefits enforcement.

Regulatory Services within the Council had been consulted on the draft revised Policy. In addition public consultation had taken place by means of the 'Consultations – Have Your Say' pages of the Council's website. This consultation ran throughout April 2022 and no comments were received from any member of the public.

The draft revised Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy, showing track changes within the main body of the Policy was attached to the report.

The new Policy reflected changes to the Code for Crown Prosecutors and these were detailed within the report.

The draft revised Policy also had additional information on civil or financial penalty notices and included as an appendix, a new penalty policy in relation to relevant letting agency legislation.

RESOLVED that the revised policy be approved.

**CAB  
15/22**

### **People Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Tees Credit Union**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the People Select Committee's review the Tees Credit Union.

The aim of the review was to consider the operation of the Credit Union since the merger with Moneywise in 2017 to ensure that it was serving the needs of the people of the Borough and specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates. The review had provided an opportunity to consider whether any opportunities for collaboration arise from this new operation and had also provided an excellent opportunity to consider whether increased support and collaboration could be achieved with businesses and VCSE organisations in the Borough.

The Select Committee had taken evidence from Moneywise Credit Union, A Fairer Stockton in Tees, SDAIS, Five Lamps, Catalyst and Daisy Chain.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Further opportunities to promote the Credit Union are explored, including:
  - Member Newsletters and social media

- Council promotion through Stockton News and social media
  - Voluntary and Community Sector/ community centres
  - Charities and Charity Shops
2. Partnership working with other financial providers and sectors is strengthened, including:
- Outreach through community-based organisations and volunteers
  - Reciprocal referral arrangements between financial providers operating locally
  - Strengthening of arrangements to refer Credit Union customers to SDAIS
  - Working to support the Fairer Stockton on Tees framework
3. The Credit Union consider whether the name reflects the ambition of the organisation and might be better re-badged Community Bank or People's Bank.
4. The app to assess benefit entitlement is investigated to understand its value and application and be promoted as appropriate alongside other sources of advice.
5. Councillors and all Council staff are encouraged to set up payroll savings with the Credit Union and become members of the Credit Union.
6. The membership of the Infinity Partnership be reviewed to ensure that it includes all relevant financial support organisations operating within the Borough.

**CAB 16/22 LA Governor Appointments**

In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school / academy governors, approved as Minute CAB 27/13 of the Cabinet (13 June 2013), Cabinet was invited to consider the nominations to school/academy Governing Bodies listed in an attachment to the report.

RESOLVED that the following appointments be made to the vacant Governorships in line with agreed procedures subject to a Personal Disclosure and DBS clearance:-

Harewood Primary School - Ralph Jordinson  
 Ingleby Mill Primary School - Steve Watson  
 High Clarence Primary School - Cllr Ann McCoy

**CAB 17/22 Place Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Residents Parking Zones**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Residents Parking Zones.

The Council had only a 'high-level' policy regarding Residents Parking Zones (RPZs) which had not been fully reviewed since 2004. There were regular requests for them from residents living near town and local shopping centres, as well as near traffic generating facilities such

as hospitals and schools. Many residents think that RPZs were a panacea with no downsides, the reality was that there were a range of issues that could arise out of them (e.g. costs to residents and visitors, no guarantee of a parking space for residents or visitors, issues with enforcement, potential loss of parking spaces, moving the problem to areas immediately outside any residents parking zone, etc.).

To fully investigate the need for a RPZ required a reasonable amount of staff resources and had a financial impact on the Council, but ultimately lead to the majority of requests being turned down either because there were no justifiable reasons to implement a scheme or because they were not supported by the majority of residents. An updated and more detailed policy and procedure might result in fewer resident requests and a more efficient way of dealing with these, thereby saving both money and officer time. The administration, maintenance and enforcement of these schemes were also an ongoing burden on Council resources.

There was limited publicly available information on how the Council assesses a request, and further clarity as to the role of Ward Councillors would be useful. Councillors could find themselves in an invidious position if they were asked whether they supported a request without having the results of the investigation arising from the request itself.

Residents had an understandable desire to be able to park near their homes, however, the full consequences of implementing a RPZ to residents were not always clear when initially requesting a scheme.

This review tied in with the Council's town centre regeneration proposals. There was an important interface between encouraging businesses and customers, and impact on residents living nearby, requiring a balance to be struck. Areas where demand on parking was oversubscribed could lead to road safety and accessibility issues, especially to those who were mobility impaired.

RPZs could help keep people safe and healthy by managing parking in areas where it was oversubscribed to ensure roads and pavements were safe to use by all. Correctly balancing the needs of residential and business-related parking could also help support jobs and the economy.

The overall aim of the review was to inform the objectives / components of a revised policy on RPZs to be contained within the revised Car Parking Policy for the Borough, and provide:

- Updated clear and transparent policy and procedures for assessing the need and implementing RPZs.
- Full information available to residents on the pros and cons of a RPZ so that they can make informed decisions about whether to request one in the first place.
- Minimise the cost to the Council of investigating, introducing, enforcing and ongoing administration of RPZs.
- Clarification of the Ward Councillor role in the process for determining whether a scheme is progressed or not.

The Select Committee took evidence from relevant Council departments,

engaged with local business groups, and considered information on similar schemes from other Local Authorities across the UK. An Elected Members survey was also conducted to elicit the views of Ward Councillors on RPZs.

RESOLVED that:-

#### Process

1. To increase understanding around Residents Parking Zones (RPZs), Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) produces and publishes a flowchart outlining the key aspects involved in the process, determination and, if approved, implementation of this scheme.
2. SBC revises its existing 'high-level' RPZ policy (making this available on the SBC website and via any other relevant publicly-accessible mechanism) to:
  - a) Clearly define the different types of permits available and what these allow / prohibit.
  - b) Provide clear guidance on the eligibility requirements for a RPZ and define what is appropriate (giving any relevant examples).
  - c) Clearly define where a RPZ would not be appropriate (e.g. around schools and not deterring people visiting high-use areas like parks).
  - d) Outline who should be consulted regarding the determination of an RPZ request (i.e. affected residents, business forums, SBC Ward Councillors, Parish / Town Councils).
3. SBC reviews the current RPZ charging policy, particularly around the cost of business permits, and the maximum quantity of permits per household / business.
4. Ward Councillor briefings are scheduled to raise awareness of a revised RPZ policy, reinforcing eligibility / exclusion criteria and opportunities for Elected Member input during the process (including ways Councillors can feed back on the any issues regarding RPZs in their Ward).

#### Determination

5. When responding to a RPZ request, SBC ensures that clearly defined criteria is used to identify the appropriate extents of a RPZ, taking account of the impact this would have on residents, nearby businesses, and visitors to that particular part of the Borough.
6. The revised RPZ policy allows for consideration of permits to be approved for single streets (where appropriate) in addition to the existing 'zonal' approach.

#### Implementation

7. Work is undertaken with the SBC Civic Enforcement team to establish an enforcement plan around existing, and potentially future, RPZs, and that any enforcement action be highlighted via SBC communication platforms as a means of deterring abuse of RPZs.

8. A periodic review of any RPZ is included as part of a revised RPZ policy (akin to West Sussex County Council).
9. An audit of existing RPZs be undertaken to ensure line markings are clear and signage is appropriate.

**CAB  
18/22**      **Town Centres Update**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on progress on investment and interventions across the Borough's six town centres and High Streets as well as interventions under the Levelling Up Fund. It recommended allocations from previously approved funds to enable interventions in Ingleby Barwick and Norton as well as onward delegations to enable the spend of previously approved funding and Levelling Up Fund grant.

RESOLVED that:-

1. A submission of a bid for £20million into Levelling Up Fund to enable redevelopment in Billingham town centre be endorsed and approval for completion of the application process be delegated to Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing
2. The progress made on design for the new Council facilities alongside the recent announcement of potential Community Diagnostic NHS facilities in Stockton town centre be noted.
3. The work undertaken to develop interventions in Norton as detailed in paragraphs 30-39 be noted and the allocation £1.44million from the £3million approved within the MTFP in February 2020 be approved to enable interventions and approval of final design and delivery of interventions be delegated to Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing
4. The work undertaken in Ingleby Barwick and the outcome of public consultation on potential interventions as detailed in paragraphs 10-29 of the report be noted and the allocation £500,000 from the £3million approved within the MTFP in February 2020 to enable delivery of greenspace and accessibility improvements at Romano Park extension and improvements to play facilities and equipment in the existing Romano Park be approved; and approval of final design and delivery of interventions be delegated to Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing
5. The progress made in Yarm and emerging work linked to Levelling Up Fund detailed in paragraph 55-59 of the report be noted.
6. The progress on relocation of businesses from Castlegate Centre and progress on the ongoing Compulsory Purchase process as detailed in paragraph 41-44 and 61 of the report be noted.



