

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 25th November, 2010.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

Officers: N.Schneider (CE); Ms J.Humphreys, Ms L.Hanley, Ms D.McConnell, S.McLurg, S.McEneaney, Ms H.Young (CESC); P.Dobson, M.Batty, R.Kench, D.Kitching, R.McGuckin, R.Poundford (DNS); D.E.Bond, N.Hart (LD); Ms J.Danks, G.Cummings, Ms A.Kelly, Ms L.King (R).

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Kevin Faulks.

Apologies: None

CAB 96/10 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Mrs McCoy and Nelson each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item as a result of their involvement with Stockton District Advice & Information Service who had contributed Housing and Development data contained within the report.

CAB 97/10 **Minutes of the meetings held on 28th October 2010 and 18th November 2010**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 October 2010 and 18 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB 98/10 **School Performance Report**

Consideration was given to an analysis of school performance for the academic year 2009/2010, along with changes identified within the educational landscape that were likely to have an impact on the work of the Education Improvement Service (EIS).

With regard to the Primary phase of schooling, Children were assessed from entry to school through to the end of Reception Class against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). The national indicators for this phase were:

- NI 72 (The percentage of children achieving an overall average of 6+ points across the EYFSP with at least 6 points scored in each of the Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) scales increases) and
- NI 92 (Improve the average (mean) score of the lowest 20% of EYFSP results so that the gap between that average score and the median, or middle score, reduces.)

It was explained that a child who achieved an average of 6 points across the aspects (a total of 78 points) had achieved the expected standard for the end of Foundation Stage. In the majority of Early Years' Foundation Stage outcomes, Stockton continues to perform at a high level, well above both North East and National averages. In 2010, the attainment of Stockton pupils at the end of Reception remained well above the national in NI 72. In this National Indicator Stockton was the highest attaining authority in the North East and the highest

attaining authority in its Statistical Neighbour group. Children at the end of Reception in Stockton achieved higher than the National in all 13 assessment scales. Stockton was the highest attaining LA in the North East in 9 of the 13 assessment scales and highest attaining in 10 of the 13 assessment scales when compared to its Statistical Neighbours.

Some areas for improvement were identified in the key areas in of Communication, Language and Literacy Strand. To this end the Every Child a Talker (ECaT) programme has been introduced to the LA in this financial year to improve the communication of pupils. This project involved all providers for children from two years plus.

With regard to Key Phase 1, when children were age 7, they were assessed by their teachers in reading, writing, maths and science. In 2010, Stockton's results had improved and remained above National for nearly all measures. Key areas for development were identified for accelerating progress in Maths and increasing attainment in Writing at Level 2b+ and in Speaking and Listening and also Reading at Level 3. At Key Stage 2, test results for Stockton schools showed significant improvement from 2009 and placed Stockton well above National and North East averages; teacher assessment results for all schools again showed improvement and placed Stockton well above National and North East averages. In the 2010 SATs, attainment in the two Special Schools which had Primary aged pupils was below floor target and below FFTB in all areas. Of the 33 mainstream schools that took the SATs in 2010, 1 school did not achieve floor target in Combined English and Maths; 1 school did not achieve floor target in English and 4 schools did not achieve floor target in Writing. The number of schools below FFT B was highest in Reading and Writing. The highest number of schools achieving above FFT D was in Maths. Of the 35 schools that entered pupils for the 2010 SATs, the performance of 8 of these was notable in particular as they met their targets; had increased their attainment from last year; and had attained above FFT D expectation. These schools had been sent letters of congratulation by the Chief Adviser.

Across primary schools overall, levels of absence improved by 0.15% to 5.02% which was below both north east (5.33%) and national (5.54%) statistics. In 2008-09 there continued to be no permanent exclusions in primary schools. There were 57 fixed term exclusions, representing 0.34% of the school population in 2008-09, an increase of 7 from the 2007-08 figure of 50, which represented 0.31% of the school population.

At Key Stage 3, statutory national tests (SATs) ceased in 2008, however schools continued to report teacher assessment results in each of the core subjects, English, maths and science. The national expectation at the end of this key stage was for children to achieve Level 5. Results at Key Stage 3 show improvement and placed Stockton in line with National and North East averages. Young people take GCSE and other equivalent examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. These national examinations were graded on an A* - G or comparable scale, with young people who achieve 5+ A* - C deemed to have reached the Level 2 threshold and those who achieve 5+ A* - G having reached the Level 1 threshold. The principle national measure of success is for young people to achieve 5+ A* - C including both English and maths. Stockton schools had achieved their best ever performance, placing outcomes in line and above National averages.

In 2009-10, absence information for the first two school terms recorded an improvement in overall absence levels of 0.12% to 7.13%. Persistent absence improved by 0.8% from 6.1% to 5.3% bringing the local authority back on target to meet its national indicator in 2011. Persistent absence and overall absence at secondary level for this period were above both national and north east statistics. There were a total of 857 exclusions from secondary schools, 847 of these were fixed term exclusions equating to 7.24% of the school population and 10 permanent exclusions, equating to 0.09% of the school population. Permanent exclusions have remained low and static at 10 for the past two years and fixed term exclusion rose from the 07/08 figure of 760 (6.30% of the school population). Aside from one local authority in the north east region which reports 0 permanent exclusions, Stockton has the lowest rate of permanent exclusion by school population at 0.09%

It was noted that from September 2009 to July 2010, 14 schools were inspected by Ofsted. These included 10 primary, 3 secondary and 1 special school. Of these inspections 2 were monitoring visits undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to judge progress of schools in categories e.g. Special Measures or schools which had previously had grade 3 'satisfactory' inspections. 12 were full Ofsted Inspections. Details of the outcome of these inspections were noted and, in summary, there was an obvious spectrum from good to inadequate. There were a number of Stockton schools that fell into Local Authority categories of concern and the Educational Improvement Service had therefore agreed a School Improvement Assessment Framework with schools which categorises schools into three categories of 'red', 'amber' and 'green'. Those categories indicated the need for support and intervention from the Local Authority and provided governors with an assessment against agreed and published criteria. The target for the Education Improvement Service was to ensure that no schools in the Borough were subject to an Ofsted category following inspection by 2012.

Cabinet noted that the present context for education was one of reform and change. There were structural changes in the way schools were run on offer to schools with the new tranche of Academies and the introduction of Free Schools. So far, in Stockton, no schools had expressed an interest in becoming a new Academy but this remained a possibility once funding options had been confirmed. There were presently two applications for Free Schools within the Borough. The White paper, which was expected imminently, would clarify further the nature of the role of Local Authorities and the following Education Bill would set this out in detail.

There remained challenges to ensure standards continued to rise and our schools were not as vulnerable in Ofsted inspections. It was incumbent on the Education Improvement Service, therefore, to ensure these roles could be carried out in this changing context and to achieve this, the service had been restructured and would continue to examine how its teams were positioned to best meet the needs of schools in further restructuring. The Service would also explore how its services could be brokered to schools and other Local Authorities to generate income. In 2009-10 EIS received 43 requests for brokered work in addition to in house brokered training. Over 50% of requests came from Governing Bodies in Stockton on Tees. To enable the EIS to be in a strong position to broker, the team was undergoing a range of accreditation for

its expertise, for example in Ofsted inspections, Section 48 inspections, coaching and Leaders of Learning.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the standards and achievement regarding school performance across the Borough for 2009/10 be noted.
2. the details regarding the new educational reforms and the implications for the Education Improvement Service be noted.

**CAB
99/10**

Scrutiny Review of Taxi Licensing

Cabinet was reminded that in March 2010, the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee, in its review of Regulatory Services, recommended to Cabinet that the issues raised by the taxi trade in relation to the value for money of the taxi licensing function be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

Details were submitted of the outcome of the review undertaken by the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee, which considered outstanding issues from the earlier review by examining:

- the resource and funding of the administration and enforcement service including the levels of enforcement and the activities undertaken.
- the vehicle testing station.
- transport planning:
 - o using taxis as part of the public transport service,
 - o the provision of taxi ranks,
 - o the use of bus lanes, and
 - o exemptions from road traffic orders.

All taxi drivers registered in the borough received written notification about the review and were invited to provide the Committee with written evidence before giving additional supporting arguments directly to the Committee at a formal meeting. A number of submissions were subsequently received and representation was made at the public meetings of the Committee.

The reasonableness of the costs levied by the Council's Licensing Department was the predominant element of the review over which the Taxi Trade representatives challenged the department. The Committee was presented with what appeared to be similar arguments and information as had been determined by the District Auditor. As a result the Committee did not reinvestigate this evidence during the review. Financial information presented to the Committee using comparative costs with other local authorities showed Stockton Council charging the second highest license fees in the region. To fully understand the figures a number of factors needed to be taken into account including the frequency of issuing licenses, the amount of monitoring/policing that takes place, and whether or not this includes 'out of office hours' enforcement.

The turnaround time for plates and licenses was a major issue for the trade although evidence showed that Stockton Council's Licensing Department dealt with 88 per cent of requests within one working day matching or bettering most of the comparison authorities. The need for taxi front plates and door plates that were dated therefore needing to be annually updated, was also questioned. A solution was to issue front and rear plates plus door signs on first licensing/replacing vehicle and only issuing dated rear plates on subsequent renewals. This suggested that a production cost saving of £25-£30 could be achieved for each renewal.

It was noted that when a person sells a vehicle they are required to complete the V5C (vehicle registration) document and send it to the DVLA. The Taxi Trade asked that plates be issued with a 28 day period of grace to produce the V5C prior to the finalising the application process. The Committee agreed with the views of the Council's Legal Department which offered caution to changing the current working practices regarding the way in which the V5C operates when transferring vehicles to another owner. As a result the Committee were of the view that no recommendation for change should be made in this regard.

The trade had been concerned for many years that proposals to increase fees and charges were not subject to independent review asking instead that the final determination of fees be delegated to the Licensing Committee. After consideration by the Committee it was agreed that a lack of transparency and fairness could be seen to exist and therefore the Committee was mindful to give more clarity in this regard.

The Taxi Trade put forward a suggestion that the Council introduce a three-year driver licence to achieve a substantial reduction in administrative costs. Over a three year period a potential saving of £40 could be achieved (in relation to supplies – only two badges issued in three years rather than six) from the £210 total that would currently be incurred. With the possibility of introducing a 3 year licence it was suggested that the department reintroduce annual written reminders for driver licence renewal which could incorporate a pro-forma for the licence but its reintroduction was likely to incur costs.

As a means of improved working arrangements, the trade asked that the garage in Cowpen Lane provide direct notification of testing results to the licensing staff based in Church Road rather than drivers having to present the documented results. An IT solution at a possible one-off cost (£500) to implement this improvement was considered feasible.

Members and officers were sympathetic to the needs of the taxi trade and their customers at Thornaby Town Centre but as the Council did not own the land in question, it was unable to allocate a taxi rank in the location desired by taxi drivers. Members were therefore eager to see further discussions take place between officers and taxi drivers in order to attempt to overcome this problem.

Taxi Trade representatives informed the Committee that they were still awaiting the outcome of a feasibility study that might allow taxis the use of bus lanes. Some Members were minded to support the use of bus lanes by taxis to improve the speed of moving around the borough. As a result the Committee requested the opportunity to comment on the results of what would now be an

in-house study.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Operational timescales be introduced, following a feasibility study, to reduce any delays in the production of plates and licenses.
2. Consultation take place and, based on the level of support given, the licence renewal date be amended to align with vehicle testing.
3. Changes be made to taxi vehicle plates to reduce the need for annual updates, other than for rear plates, following initial vehicle licensing.
4. the final determination of fees be delegated to the Licensing Committee if six or more objections are received.
5. The trade be consulted to determine the support for 3 year licenses and whether they should be compulsory to allow larger cost savings, or optional.
6. The trade be consulted on the reintroduction of reminders/partly completed application forms and introduced if sufficient support was given.
7. Subject to support, CRB renewals be aligned to driver licence renewals.
8. A phased introduction be approved for the production and issuing of driver badges, linked to the licence application and CRB renewal, before an existing badge expired.
9. The appropriate IT equipment be purchased using monies from the Taxi Trading Account to enable electronic documentation transfer from the vehicle testing centre to the Licensing Office.
10. Continued discussions take place involving all relevant parties (including ward councillors) to attempt to identify a suitable location for a taxi rank to serve Thornaby Town Centre.
11. The results of the in-house survey regarding the use of bus lanes by taxis be presented at a future meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee prior to any decisions being taken.

CAB 100/10 EIT Review of Fair Access to Care Services - Report of Health Select Committee

Consideration was given to the findings of the Health Select Committee's EIT Review of Fair Access to Services. The review examined proposals to amend the Council's eligibility criteria for adult social care services. This included an extensive consultation process, the results of which were included.

The Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) guidance, published in 2002, provided a national framework for local authorities to use when determining eligibility for adult social care based on assessed needs. This guidance outlined how councils should use, review and if appropriate revise their eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria was divided into four bands of need and the level of need at

which care was provided was at the discretion of the relevant local authority. During the period of the review, the Department of Health issued revised eligibility guidance which sought to address issues in the overall framework and included a greater emphasis on prevention and universal services (particularly relevant for those councils looking to raise the eligibility threshold), whilst making it clear that eligibility criteria must be used within the wider personalisation agenda. The four band system remained in place.

In summary, the Committee found that Stockton Council provided social care to those who had needs that were in the Critical, Substantial and Moderate bands. In addition, aids and adaptations ('equipment') were also provided to clients in the Low band. There was a national trend to provide care for people assessed as being in the Substantial and Critical bands only. As of 2007-8, 72% of councils provided care at the Substantial level or above. It was evident that the general pressures on funding and other factors including demography, were having an increasing impact upon the ability of the Council to continue to provide the current range of services, and that the 60% increase in spending between 2002-3 and 2010-11 would become increasingly unsustainable in the future.

The Committee considered the pressures on adult social care, and the results of the consultation, and considered that it would be appropriate to recommend that the eligibility criteria be raised to Substantial and Critical bands only, as this would allow the Council to focus its adult care services on those most in need. It should also be recognised that there was an opportunity to further develop preventative services, in order to ensure that some people will not need social care at all, and to delay the entry into the system of those who will. The Committee also considered that there should be further work undertaken in relation to the provision of equipment in order to ensure the shift to a higher eligibility threshold was properly implemented across all types of service provided. Additional monitoring of the assessment and review process should be considered to ensure consistency and a robust communications plan should be developed prior to implementation of the recommendations.

Due to uncertainty over funding and the variables involved in implementing any change, the Committee felt unable to make precise recommendations about the type of community based services that should be supported. However it was clear to Members that there was a need for this and that a preventative approach should be taken, using the priorities identified during the consultation process where appropriate. It would be important to mitigate the impact of the higher eligibility threshold as far as was possible, and the Committee were of the view that the Council should focus its support on targeted services, including assistive technology (e.g. Telecare). Where appropriate, consideration should also be given to utilising the services of the voluntary and community sector, especially in relation to community based services and to supporting its capacity to provide these. It was clear that many services already existed in the Borough, and that often what was required was better co-ordination and signposting.

In presenting the report to Cabinet, the Chair of the Select Committee referred Cabinet to the legal implications contained within the report and in particular that the Council needs to have due regard to its equality duties, particularly in relation to disability, gender and race, and the actions that should be taken to

monitor, and mitigate, the impact of the change.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the Council amend its eligibility criteria for adult social care by removing the Moderate band and providing care to those in Critical and Substantial bands only;
2. the revised policy be implemented for all assessments and re-assessments that take place following 1 April 2011;
3. specific work be undertaken to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of aids and adaptations in line with the revised eligibility criteria that will take effect from 1 April 2011;
4. a communications plan be developed in order to clearly communicate the revised policy and its implications to clients, staff and stakeholders including Members, and that the information provided to clients should continue to include reference to the availability of advocacy and other methods of support when undergoing assessments;
5. further consideration be given to the additional operational and resource requirements of undertaking the assessment/re-assessment process during the initial 12 months operation of the revised policy;
6. subject to the availability of resources, investment should take place in targeted community services, using a preventative approach and the emerging priorities outlined in the report where possible, and that particular consideration should be given to investment in further assistive technology (for example Telecare);
7. the wider corporate support initiatives to the voluntary and community sector be endorsed, and as part of this, consideration be given to enabling this sector to focus on preventative, community services for Adults, on a sustainable basis where possible, utilising the range of programmes that have been developed e.g. the Voluntary and Community Sector Investment Fund;
8. advice and information services be further developed to enable signposting to community services, and that such services should be up to date and accessible, include effective promotion of community services that already exist, and be linked to the work being undertaken as part of the implementation of the EIT Review of Advice and Information, and the Personalisation implementation programme;
9. the impact of the revised policy should be monitored through the implementation of the Action Plan from the Equality Impact Assessment;
10. to ensure that data quality is maintained, a process should be put in place to monitor the information held in relation to clients' eligibility bandings and to keep this under review, and progress be reported to the Health Select Committee as part of the established monitoring procedures.

101/10

In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school governors, approved at Minute 84 of the Cabinet (11th May 2000), Cabinet was requested to approve the nominations to school Governing Bodies as detailed within the report.

RESOLVED that appointments be made to the vacant Governorships subject to successful List 99 check and Personal Disclosure, as follows:-

Harrow Gate Primary School-Ms Denise Williams
Hartburn Primary School-Cllr Aidan Cockerill
Community Primary School, Billingham-Mr C.Anderson, Mr N.Jones, Mrs M.Rees
Whinstone Primary School-Mr Mehnaz Rashid

CAB 102/10 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Third Local Transport Plan

It was noted that the Council's Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) covered the period to 31st March 2011, and after this date, the Council's Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) would come in to effect. Cabinet had previously been provided with a report on LTP3 which explained the Department for Transport's new approach to Local Transport Plans and informed members of the consultation strategy proposed for the document.

Since then, good progress had been made in terms of consultation and development of the document which would include the 10-year Tees Valley Transport Strategy underpinned by a 5-year local strategy (including 4 Area Transport Strategies) and implementation plan. The Tees Valley Transport Strategy was due to be signed off in November following input from the Local Authorities. Consultation had taken place through a web-based questionnaire, a viewpoint panel questionnaire, an independent consultation event and via the Area Transport Strategy Steering Groups. Further consultation would commence once a draft document was prepared.

Despite the progress made, the change of Government in May 2010, and subsequent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), had created a period of uncertainty over several issues that would affect LTP3 which had ultimately led to a delay in the production of the document. A summary of how this had affected the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) and capital funding was submitted.

It was however expected to have the LTP3 in place by the deadline of 1st April 2011 and a draft document would be available in November 2010.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the report be noted.
2. the proposed consultation process on the draft document be approved.

**CAB
103/10** **Economic Climate Update Report**

Members considered a report that provided an overview of the current economic climate, outlining the effects that this was having on Stockton Borough, and the mitigations already in place and those being developed in response to this.

Members were provided with a range of economic indicators for the Borough, sub region, region and nationally. Further to the last meeting, confirmation had been received from Jobcentreplus that the number of job vacancies it had advertised were indeed local jobs, with some 936 unfilled vacancies existing at the time of completion of the report. Members indicated a wish to hear further on the types of jobs that currently lay vacant, and it was suggested that Chris Livingstone of Jobcentreplus, be invited to a future meeting of Cabinet to give a flavour of the detail behind the statistics.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the content of the report and support work undertaken to date be noted.
2. Chris Livingstone from Jobcentreplus be invited to a future meeting of Cabinet to give a flavour of the detail behind the statistics.

**CAB
104/10** **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

Cabinet considered a report that presented Cabinet with a summary of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for 2010.

It was explained that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was a process that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Local Authorities had a duty to work on together to describe the health, wellbeing and care needs of the populations they served. It would be used to develop the right services in the right way to meet those needs. The process was part of a 'duty to cooperate' that the government set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007).

Undertaking needs assessments had long been integral to the strategic planning and commissioning of services in the Council, the PCT, and other partners we work with. Analysis of many sources of information underpins the whole range of plans and strategies that inform the work of the Local Strategic Partnership. Cabinet noted what made JSNA different from other plans:

- a) it was a statutory requirement.
- b) it must be done jointly between the local authority and PCT.
- c) it takes a long-term strategic-level view, looking up to 10 years ahead.
- d) it brings together in one source, the range of information across partners that informs the health and wellbeing needs of our communities.

The purpose of the JSNA was to highlight the main health and wellbeing

priorities for Stockton-on-Tees, taking account of data and information on inequalities within and between communities. It had been prepared by the Health & Wellbeing Management Team on behalf of the Health & Wellbeing Partnership, the thematic group of the Local Strategic Partnership with representation from a wide range of local partners, which would have a key role in ensuring that the JSNA was used effectively to support the delivery of a health and wellbeing strategy for the Stockton-on-Tees area.

This was the third JSNA, which had built on the process undertaken last year. There had been further analysis undertaken including additional benchmarking, more recent data updates and ward based analysis. There had been additional sections included in the reference document during 2010 to address Poverty and Health and Vulnerable Groups.

The JSNA had involved a range of stakeholders who had had an opportunity to comment and contribute to the document development; however, much of the document was a synthesis of priorities and issues, which had been identified via specific consultation routes.

An important benefit of the JSNA was that it provided an opportunity to look ahead over the long-term – at least three to five years, and longer still – so that:

- a) services were shaped by involvement of local people and communities.
- b) inequalities in health were reduced.
- c) health care was provided in proportion to need (to reduce inequity).
- d) social inclusion was increased.
- e) those outcomes were achieved cost-effectively.

The JSNA would be an integral part of the planning cycle for all involved so that it continued to inform key strategic priorities for the health and wellbeing of our area, and supported delivery of our business planning processes. Within the White Paper for Health Delivering Equity and Excellence, the role of the JSNA continued to be an integral part of planning processes but the responsibility would transfer to the Local Authority.

RESOLVED that the JSNA summary be received and its linkage to the key strategies and plans that support delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy be noted.

CAB **EIT Review of Adult Operational Services**
105/10

Cabinet considered a report relating to elements of the EIT Review of Adult Operational Services, namely Blenheim House Care Home and STEPs at Tithbarn service.

Members were reminded that Cabinet had agreed to authorise officers to enter consultation with staff, clients, carers and stakeholders regarding the re-provision of alternative services to current clients and potential cessation of the STEPs at Tithbarn element of the STEPs group of services with the aim of re-deploying existing employees as appropriate.

It was noted that STEPs at Tithbarn was able to provide up to 25 places per

day. The service had been under utilised and had not reached its potential since its inception in 2004. Attendance had routinely averaged one third of anticipated capacity.

The first clients to attend the service formerly attended Alma Day Centre. These clients were identified as being receptive, and able, to undertake skills development to access further education or employment. Contrary to the initial plans for this service, whereby clients were anticipated to attend on a session basis at pre-determined times they actually accessed the service daily in line with their former attendance at Alma Day Centre.

This attendance pattern created a requirement for 2 buses through the Community Transport services at a cost of £80k per annum. This corresponded with an increasing under provision of buses for the adult and older person's Day Care Centres.

It was anticipated that the requirements of all clients could be met appropriately through access to existing services and/or individual directed support through a personal budget.

Consultation with clients, carers, staff and UNISON had been undertaken and the notes from those meetings were provided to members.

Cabinet had also authorised officers to enter consultation with staff, clients, carers, trades unions and stakeholders regarding the potential cessation of services at Blenheim House with the aim of re-deploying existing employees, as appropriate, in recognition of the ongoing re-provision of alternative services to long term clients, in line with their individual preferences to live more independently in a location of their choice. It was also in recognition of the low number of clients whose carers requested respite breaks at this facility.

The Care Home could accommodate up to 29 clients in single rooms with shared lounges, dining areas, bathrooms and toilets. An independent living flat above the main building did not have a lift for access so severely restricts the usage of this facility.

Client contributions for the services were dependent on an individual financial assessment.

The EIT Review of Adult Services recognised and acknowledged the potential impact of the corresponding Transport E.I.T. review, the FACS E.I.T. review and the roll out of self directed support through personalised budgets.

The E.I.T. Review of Blenheim House was influenced by the reducing long term resident population and the potential impact of funding sources being reduced or withdrawn by the Tees Unitary Authorities currently purchasing care from Stockton-on-Tees, at Blenheim House.

Of the remaining 15 long term care clients at Blenheim House, prior to the EIT reviews, 6 were funded by Middlesbrough, 2 were funded by Redcar/Cleveland, 1 was funded by Hartlepool and the remaining 6 were Stockton-on-Tees residents. Middlesbrough had previously expressed a wish to speak to the clients funded by that Authority with a view to offering repatriation where

appropriate.

Following a quality assessment survey of long term clients in which 4 stated they would like to live differently, informal reviews of all 15 were undertaken, all expressed a wish to be more reliably informed about alternative care provision for people with assessed needs.

Since the start of the formal reviews, 8 clients have accepted alternative care provision. 4 of these clients were funded by Middlesbrough, 2 by Redcar/Cleveland and 2 by Stockton on Tees. The remaining 7 clients were waiting for placements of their choice. Two medium term clients had also returned to independent living in the community.

. Blenheim House had a staff group currently of 32. Consultation with staff and UNISON had been undertaken and the notes from those meetings were provided. Consultation with clients and carers was also undertaken and notes provided to Members.

Members were provided with financial implications associated with the re provision of services currently provided by Tithebarn and Blenheim House. It was estimated that, with regard to Tithebarn, annual savings of £113k could be achieved by 2011/12 and for Blenheim House annual savings of £181k could be achieved.

RESOLVED that:-

1. officers progress the cessation of the STEPs at Tithebarn element of the STEPs group of services and re-provide services to clients currently attending this facility in line with their assessed needs and eligibility for service provision. Furthermore to re-deploy existing employees as appropriate and return the building to the asset portfolio of Stockton Borough Council for re-use or disposal
2. officers progress the cessation of services at Blenheim House, in recognition of the ongoing re-provision of alternative services to long term clients, in line with their individual preferences to live more independently in a location of their choice and to re-deploy existing employees as appropriate. To return Blenheim House to the asset portfolio of Stockton Borough Council for re-use or disposal
3. support be provided to carers requiring respite breaks to enable them to continue their caring role by working with funding authorities in assisting them to identify appropriate alternative services.

CAB 106/10 CRC - Energy Efficiency Scheme Update

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on The Council's position in respect of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC). It also sets out the implications of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review.

Members were reminded that the Council had completed the registration and enrolment with the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme in August 2010. The registration fee of £950 had been paid.

Work had progressed on quality procedures, records and the audit trail required for compliance with the scheme.

It was expected that the first purchase of carbon allowances for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council would be made during April 2011 with a recycling payment to be received in October 2011. However in the full report of the 20 October Comprehensive Spending Review the following clause was published:

'The CRC Energy Efficiency scheme will be simplified to reduce the burden on businesses, with the first allowance sales for 2011-12 emissions now taking place in 2012 rather than 2011. Revenues from allowance sales totalling £1billion a year by 2014-15 will be used to support the public finances, including spending on the environment, rather than recycled to participants. Further decisions on allowance sales are a matter for the Budget process.'

At present no further detail was available but it was assumed that the first payment for carbon allowances to cover 2011/12 emissions would be made in April 2012 with no recycling payment, i.e. as a tax payable to the Treasury. It was estimated that the cost of this at £12/tonne would be around £250k. However, there had been an indication from commentators that the price may rise to £16/tonne bringing the total for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to £333k.

Provision would therefore need to be made in the budget for 2012/13 for this payment.

No information was available concerning other aspects of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme such as the league table and bonus system, trading and record keeping. Since the allowances would be paid for retrospectively the role of trading must be in doubt.

Qualification to participate in the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme was determined by electricity consumption recorded on half hourly meters during the calendar year 2008. The qualifying limit was 6,000MWh. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council consumption was 7,500 kWh thus committing the Council to full participation.

Assuming the 6,000MWh limit remained the objective must be to reduce qualifying consumption to less than that figure. At present grid connected renewable electricity that benefited from Feed in Tariffs or Renewable Obligation Certificates was counted as grid electricity to avoid double counting. However, it was explained that, there might be ways around this through the Power Purchase Agreement approach currently being explored.

The objective recommended was to reduce the electricity consumption on half hourly meters to drop below the qualifying limit, though this would be subject to any other changes to the scheme.

It was recommended that no specific action be taken until details on the future arrangements for the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme had been published.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

CAB **Consultation Strategy**
107/10

Cabinet was presented with the revised Consultation Strategy (Let's Listen) – produced as a result of the EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement. The Consultation Strategy provided a framework for all consultation carried out by the Council, as well as establishing the processes by which it would be managed and evaluated.

Members were reminded that the EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement identified the need for an up-to-date Consultation Strategy – the last one being published in 2007. The proposed Consultation Strategy was provided to Members.

The Strategy was supported by a guidance document (Putting Consultation into Practice) for officers.

The Strategy was part of a wider suite of documents that collectively outlined the Council's approach to Communication, Consultation and Engagement, making references where appropriate to key partners, which included:

- Communications Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy – Let's Get Engaged
- Community Assets Transfer Policy
- Third Sector Investment Fund
- Community Fund

Consultation on the Strategy had been conducted with Policy Officers Group, Heads of Service, key partners, the Cabinet portfolio holder, Group Leaders and CASSI Select Committee who conducted the original review.

An implementation plan has been developed and a key action from the plan was to update the Concordat for Members and this would be done jointly with Democratic Services and brought to a future Cabinet for approval.

The EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement identified that there was a capacity issue relating to Consultation. This would be addressed as part of the wider Engagement Strategy implementation and EIT review that included Business Support and Performance Management.

The Consultation Plan format had been revised to be fit for purpose. The plan would be updated quarterly and focus on the top level consultations. The Consultation Plan would be used corporately to monitor and support consultation activity and to offer advice and training where required. The Consultation Plan:

- would be available on the Intranet for officers and Members
- would be used to produce an Annual Consultation report as part of a revised approach to Council and public reporting of performance
- would be used to create a Consultation Finder facility on the Council's website detailing current, planned and completed consultation exercises
- would be used by services to complete the quarterly performance reports and

information profiles.

RESOLVED that the Consultation Strategy be endorsed.

CAB
108/10 **Communications Strategy**

Cabinet considered a report presenting and seeking approval of a Communications Strategy for the Council.

Members were reminded that the EIT Review of Communications, Consultation and Engagement was carried out by the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee and approved by Cabinet on 26th November 2009. The Committee concluded that there was a need for better coordination of internal communications functions and a clearer strategic focus in the way Stockton Council communicated.

The development of an overarching communications strategy was vital to providing this clearer strategic focus and was a key deliverable for the new Head of Communications who had been appointed as part of the review's recommendations.

Other progress made following the EIT CCE Review had been the centralisation of the communications unit and the budget to support its activities. There had been a rationalisation of the campaigns and key messages to make the role and function of the council clearer and a greater control on the quality and cost-effectiveness of the information and messages being issued by Stockton Council.

The CCE review involved consultation with a number of groups including: elected members, the Viewpoint Panel, the young people's panel, Council staff and trade unions. Best practice approaches were also taken from other local councils and the IDeA. This strategy sets out how the recommendations of the EIT CCE Review and the views from these consultations were being taken forward by the new centralised communications unit under the leadership of the Head of Communications.

Specifically, the Communications Strategy aims to achieve the following overall outcomes:

- To improve public understanding, support and confidence in the Council providing information about our services, policies, decisions, and delivery achievements.
- To support the development of effective relationships with Council partners, and in particular the business community and national government.
- To support Council Members and Council staff to highlight their role, responsibilities and achievements.
- To encourage participation and involvement in the Council's work and decisions.
- To raise the profile of the Borough to a range of opinion formers,

policy-makers, visitors, business investors and potential relocators regionally, nationally and internationally.

A number of principles underpin the Strategy. They were to provide communications that:

- Were open, honest and timely
- Were accessible and appropriate to each audience
- Use language that was easy to understand
- Were cost-effective and efficient
- Support feedback and influence from residents and other audiences
- Use new forms of communications technology

The Communications Strategy sets out how the Council will communicate to the many audiences that have an interest or a say in the council's work. It explains the key messages and communications campaigns the Council will deliver in the year and also the communications channels it will use and the audiences to reach.

The Communications Strategy supports the Council's Consultation Strategy and Engagement Strategy in helping communities to get more involved and have their say in the council's many and varied areas of work.

RESOLVED that the Communications Strategy be approved.

CAB **Minutes of Various Bodies**
109/10

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of various bodies.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings be received/approved, as appropriate:-

Leadership Board - 10 June 2010
Children's Trust Board - 2 July 2010
Leadership Board - 25 August 2010
Safer Stockton Partnership - 28 September 2010
Health and Wellbeing Board - 25 October 2010

CAB **Stockton International Riverside Festival 2010**
110/10

Cabinet considered a report relating to the 2010 Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF).

Members noted that 2010 was the 23rd Stockton International Riverside Festival and 20th Stockton Riverside Fringe and it had been another extremely successful year. SIRF presented the largest programme for many years with over 200 performances by 32 companies from 7 European countries. The Community Carnival was the largest yet with over 1,350 participants and the Fringe presented fantastic headline acts alongside our local musicians. The Festival had continuing high visitor satisfaction ratings, positive impact on Stockton's image and significant economic benefits for the town.

SIRF 2010 presented an excellent creative programme of UK and international

shows, justifying SIRF's position as one of the finest street arts festivals in Europe: The Council commissioned new work, largely through the Without Walls consortium of UK street arts festivals; introduced European companies to the UK and participated in a cultural exchange programme with a festival in France, introducing UK companies to Europe. There was also an inclusive Community Carnival, one of the largest in the UK.

Analysis of the substantial body of data from the annual SIRF Visitors Survey was ongoing but the initial report revealed the following headline statistics:

- 98% of visitors thought that SIRF was a good thing for Stockton Borough.
- 93% of visitors thought SIRF was good for promoting Stockton Borough as a place to visit
- 92% of visitors thought that supporting SIRF is a good use of Stockton Borough Council's resources.
- A quarter of businesses experienced a 50% or greater increase in turnover during the Festival
- SIRF and Fringe generated £1.9m of income for the Borough
- 1,351 participants and 62 groups participated in the Community Carnival, with every ward in the borough represented.
- 26 new community groups were involved.
- SIRF and Fringe combined presented more than 300 performances to estimated audiences of over 160,000 people.

It was considered that SIRF 2010 was well planned and executed. As in previous years, the various internal and external partners collaborated to create an experience for the visitor that was unified and coherent.

Members were provided with details of the 2010 programme and noted issues around Management and Delivery, Marketing and Communications, signage and hospitality. Cabinet discussed finances associated with the delivery of SIRF and was provided with an additional note relating to SIRF 2010 costs. It was noted that charging for certain attractions would be an increasing feature of future Festivals.

RESOLVED that the success and feedback of SIRF 2010 be noted and the proposal to increase the use of charging in future festivals be accepted.

CAB 111/10 Review of Parliamentary General Election 2010 and emerging issues for 2011

Members considered a report that provided feedback from a review of the Parliamentary General Election 2010. The report also looked ahead to next year's Local and Parish Elections, the likely referendum on the Parliamentary voting system and the possible Mayoral referendum.

Members were provided with details of what had gone well, including:-

- Staffing and the corporate commitment to release Council employed staff to work on elections.
- Partnership with NEPO contractors Adare
- Use of Thornaby Pavilion for the verification and count
- Use of Architects to establish best use of floor space

Cabinet noted that many of the procedures and practices in place would be improved further and would assist with next year's Local Elections

It was considered that improvements to arrangements could be made by reducing the number of mobile polling stations used. Brief details of how officers were working to achieve a reduction were provided to members.

It was explained that the Electoral Commission had produced a report on the 2010 General Elections and details of the reports findings were set out for members. The report also set out the Commission's agenda for the next five years and called on the Government to respond to recommendations that were made in 2008 to produce a comprehensive plan for ensuring consistently effective management and delivery of elections.

Members noted that the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill was being considered by the House of Lords. The Bill proposed a referendum on whether to adopt the 'alternative vote' system instead of the 'first past the post' system for Westminster Parliamentary Elections. The referendum would take place on 5 May 2011, the same day as the Local and Parish Elections. Cabinet considered some of the logistical challenges that would be created by the elections and referendum taking place on the same day. These challenges would be increased further should a Mayoral referendum also need to take place on that day.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- 1. the corporate commitment to encourage SBC staff to undertake election duties be renewed**
- 2. Officers continue to work with colleagues in Architects to establish best use of floor space to accommodate the Count for the Referendum, Local and Parish elections and the area designated for the adjudication of ballot papers for the Referendum, Local and Parish elections**
- 3. the impact of additional legislation for the 2011 multiple elections be reported to Corporate Management Team as relevant information becomes available.**