

CABINET

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday 16 May 2024.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Leader), Cllr Pauline Beall (Cabinet Member), Cllr Nigel Cooke (Cabinet Member), Cllr Lisa Evans (Cabinet Member), Cllr Clare Gamble (Cabinet Member), Cllr Steve Nelson (Cabinet Member) and Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Cabinet Member).

Officers: Peter Bell, Sarah Bowman-Abouna, Julie Butcher, Garry Cummings, Jane Edmends, Mike Greene, Eddie Huntington, Reuben Kench, Majella McCarthy, Ged Morton, Carolyn Nice and Chris Renahan.

Also in attendance: Cllr Lynn Hall and Cllr Hilary Vickers

Apologies:

CAB/7/24 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

CAB/8/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CAB/9/24 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting which was held on 18 April 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

CAB/10/24 Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision - Final Report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's review of Outdoor Play Provision.

RESOLVED that:-

1. SBC ensures both revenue and renewal considerations are an intrinsic part of any existing and future outdoor play space proposal within the Borough to maximise the long-term sustainability of such sites.
2. To encourage a greater sense of community ownership, consideration be given to approaching relevant Town / Parish Councils and the local business community within the vicinity of existing outdoor play spaces to potentially support the development / maintenance of a site.

3. Regarding future proposals by developers for new outdoor play spaces, SBC does not adopt any site installed by a developer which contravenes the key outcomes from this review.

4. SBC considers support of existing play areas before any additional outdoor play spaces are agreed / approved.

5. Regarding inequality of outdoor play provision across the Borough, SBC clarifies where it is deemed there is little / no provision and possible steps to address these inequalities (including, in exceptional cases, the provision of new play spaces).

6. As part of a required rationalisation process in relation to the existing outdoor play offer:

a) Informed by the recent (March 2024) RoSPA assessments and an analysis of the distribution of existing outdoor play provision, proposals for the removal / repurposing of sites be developed with the aim of reducing pressure on the overall parks budget.

b) Complementing sub-section a), SBC undertakes a piece of work around those sites requiring more urgent attention to ascertain costs of either removing the play area or raising it to an appropriate standard.

c) Further detail be provided around the anticipated longer-term maintenance requirements of the new Stockton waterfront park and the impact that this may have on the available funds for maintaining other existing outdoor play spaces.

d) With due regard to the SBC Powering Our Future initiative, appropriate consultation (particularly with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and SBC Ward Councillors) is conducted around any proposed changes to existing outdoor play provision.

7. Reflecting the main outcomes from this review, SBC develops and publishes an outdoor play provision strategy which includes the following elements:

- The Council's aims in relation to the provision of outdoor play spaces.
- The locations and assessments of existing and outdoor play provision, as well as any planned developments.
- The key challenges associated with providing these spaces.
- How the Council will seek to address these key challenges (including guiding principles).
- Timelines for action and who will be accountable.

8. This final report be shared with the SBC Planning Committee for information only.

CAB/11/24 Delivering Better Value Agreement with DfE

Consideration was given to a report that advised Cabinet that the Council successfully submitted a revised Delivering Better Value plan (DBV) to DfE on February 19, 2024.

The plan was approved on behalf of the Council by the Director of Childrens Services and the Councils 151 Officer after positive scrutiny by DfE advisors and in accordance with delated authority. The Council was awaiting the formal signature to the plan and agreement by Government Ministers.

Resulting from the submission, the LA was in Phase 2 of the DBV programme which provided DfE grant funding to support the implementation of the action plan and SBC had been allocated £1m for this purpose. This funding, covering financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, was originally based on 3 main initiatives but following the re-submission of the DBV plan it had been agreed with DfE to re-align the plan with the 8 DBV initiatives.

The agreement required the Council to fully mitigate the aggregated DSG deficit by 2027/28 where lasting sustainability and reaching an in-year balance could be demonstrated for its High Needs Funding Budget.

Schools' forum with the DCS and AD for Education agreed to undertake a review of what was needed and how best to delivery for local children and school's forum to look at how they could support with extra places for SEND children who might otherwise need to be placed in expensive independent placements. School leaders were open to suggestions and a range had agreed to either expand existing provision or look at some capital works to create new spaces. Some of this work had begun and other elements were at the feasibility and planning stages.

The school's forum's banding group also agreed to some commissioning work for communication and speech and language needs prioritising work with younger children but also looking at transition work for older children. This was underway, led by children's head of strategy and commissioning.

School leaders were now looking at creative ways of supporting groups of children with high needs funding rather than just individuals. This could mean moving individuals to be with one or two others to use funding more effectively whilst keeping them attached to a mainstream school.

The work programme described above may well necessitate some invest to save proposals which may not result in immediate savings but should result in a more fit for purpose HN system in Stockton; one that was in-line with the revised DBV plan and that would enable the LA to mitigate the aggregated DSG deficit by 2027/28.

School's forum had been kept abreast of developments and had helped to co-construct these innovative solutions in partnership with LA officers and the Director of Children's Services.

Considerable work had been undertaken to fully understand the needs of children and young people with EHCP plans together with consultation with school leaders and School Forum which had informed a DBV plan that would increase the number of children with a EHCP in mainstream schools through inclusion, improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the need for EHCP's through earlier access to resources, and reduce costs and the need for out of area and costly settings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CAB/12/24 A Fairer Stockton on Tees Progress Update

Consideration was given to a report that gave a progress update on Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Progress.

Cabinet endorsed 'A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees: A Strategic Framework for Reducing Inequalities' in October 2021. The Fairer Stockton-on-Tees (FSOT) Framework detailed the Councils long term vision and commitment (over a 10 year period) to tackling inequalities in the Borough. The report provided an overview of recent activity to address poverty and inequality including examples of how the Council worked in partnership and collaboration with both our local communities and wider statutory and VCSE partners.

The FSOT Framework was fundamentally aligned to the Councils Powering Our Futures programme (specifically the Communities Powering Our Future and Transformation Powering Our Future missions).

RESOLVED that:-

1. The range and variety of activity (detailed in Appendix 1 of the report) which has been undertaken or is ongoing in partnership with our local communities, VSCE and broader partners be noted.
2. It be noted that whilst the FSOT Framework is aimed at addressing inequalities, due to the current economic situation and the cost of living challenges faced by many of the boroughs residents there has been a focus on addressing and mitigating the impact of poverty.
3. It be noted that work is ongoing with those with lived experience to develop an Anti-Poverty Plan (and supporting Action Plan) and this will be presented back to Cabinet at the September 2024 meeting.

CAB/13/24 Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation

Consideration was given to a report Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation

A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2023, which sought approval to commence consultation on the proposed implementation of Selective Licensing in 3 areas of the borough Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. This decision was informed by an evidence based assessment (Appendix 1 of the report 'Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal' and Appendix 2 of the report the 'Supporting Evidence Base') informed by relevant Government Guidance (DLUHC Selective Licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities' updated June 2023). At this meeting, Cabinet granted approval 'in principle' to pursue a Selective Licensing scheme in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown and for a programme of public consultation to be undertaken.

This report detailed the consultation process undertaken, the responses received, and the considerations given to the views/representations received.

With regard to consultation in total 231 completed questionnaires were received, 12 email responses and 3 written replies from organisations representing landlord groups (the PLuSS, National Residential Landlords Association and safeagent). Appendix 3 of the report 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' provided a detailed breakdown of responses on a question-by-question basis (broken down by respondent group). The open questionnaire responses, the 12 email responses and the NRLA, PLuSS and safeagent replies were also analysed and were reported separately as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report, which also details the Council's considerations and response/s to the comments received.

With regard to the next steps, should Cabinet agree to proceed with Selective Licensing this would trigger a formal notification by way of a designation notice, which must be followed by a period of at least 3 months before any scheme can come into effect. Following the issue of the designation notice Cabinet were asked to delegate authority to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration to set a date for license applications to be invited and processed. Once effective, the scheme would be in place for a period of 5 years, subject to periodic reviews.

To deliver Selective Licensing it was important that appropriate and suitably qualified staff were appointed. Phased recruitment would commence once a final Cabinet decision had been made, phased recruitment would allow the team to 'flex' depending on the number of Selective Licensing applications received.

Large detailed maps of the designated areas were available to view by Members at the meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

1. It be noted that the consultation programme undertaken with the aim of ensuring that the Council took "reasonable steps to consult with person who are likely to be affected by the designation" as required by Section 80(9) of the Housing Act 2004, and in accordance with Government guidance. The consultation process undertaken is detailed in the 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' Appendix 3 chapter 2 of the report).
2. It be noted that the outcome of the consultation process as detailed in Appendix 3 'Consultation Findings Report' and the Council's considerations of these representations Appendix 4 of the report 'Summary of representations made to the consultation and the Council's considerations and responses'.
3. The Selective Licensing Proposal Paper (Appendix 1 of the report) and the Supporting Evidence Base (Appendix 2 of the report) met the legal requirements for introducing Selective Licensing designations (as detailed in paragraphs 4 to 6 of the report).
4. Subject to approval of recommendations 1, 2 and 3 the designation of Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown be authorised, as delineated in the attached red line maps (Appendix 5a, 5b and 5c of the report, with supporting street listings), for Selective Licensing to last for 5 years from the date of the designations coming into force.

5. It be noted that there are no changes proposed to the Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown areas as previously considered by Cabinet on the 12 October 2023 (red line maps Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c of the report).

6. It be noted that changes are proposed to the License Conditions previously considered by Cabinet (12 October 2023) and the proposed License Conditions attached at Appendix 6 of the report be approved.

7. The final fee structure and discounts as detailed in paragraph 16 - 19 of the report be approved.

8. Authority to issue the required statutory notifications in relation to Selective Licensing Designation be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration.

9. It be noted that upon approval the scheme will be publicised via an agreed communications plan and in accordance with the Regulations before the designations come into force.

10. Subject to the issue of statutory notifications, the Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration be authorised to decide the date from which the Council will begin to accept applications for Selective Licensing.

CAB/14/24 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24 was brought to Cabinet for consideration.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), the Director of Public Health has a duty to prepare an independent annual report. The report followed the Director of Public Health report presented in November 2023 which reviewed the public health response to Covid-19 in Stockton-on-Tees.

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24 highlighted the challenge of persistent health inequalities experienced by people in Stockton-on-Tees. Health inequalities and poor health and wellbeing had a significant impact on people's lives, were unjust and largely preventable.

The report highlighted existing examples of good practice and strong partnerships with other organisations and the voluntary and community sector but was clear that a holistic and systematic approach was required to go further and faster in addressing inequalities.

The proposed approach with interventions in civic society, community and services based on a self-assessment complements the Council's Powering our Future policy.

With regard to consultation and engagement the report described some of the key work undertaken with partners and communities to address health inequalities. Working collaboratively with communities, partners and councillors was essential in addressing health inequalities.

With regard to the next steps embedding learning and monitoring of public health activity would continue to be overseen and reported through the Lead Member, Corporate Management Team and Health and Wellbeing Board as part of core business.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The Population Intervention Triangle model be adopted across the Council and it's work with partners as set out in the DPH Report 2023/4.