

CABINET

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday 12 September 2024.

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

Officers: Mike Greene, Geraldine Brown, Garry Cummings, Reuben Kench, Ged Morton, Majella McCarthy, Carolyn Nice, Jane Edmonds, Clare Harper, Eddie Huntington, Iain Robinson, Julie Butcher and Peter Bell.

Also in attendance:

Apologies:

CAB/36/24 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CAB/37/24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a Other Registerable Interest in respect of item - Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint as he was a member of Tees Active Board. Councillor Steve Nelson withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

CAB/38/24 Minutes

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

CAB/39/24 Financial Update and Medium Term Financial Plan (2024/25 Quarter 1)

Consideration was given to a report that summarised the Council's financial performance and position at the end of the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. Members were aware from the budget report in February 2024 that the Council had a budget gap of £1.9m in the current financial year rising to £8.1m in 2026/27, with the transformation programme being key to resolve the financial position.

The Powering our Futures programme and associated transformation reviews were well underway and Members were aware that these reviews were addressing the aforementioned budget gap. The reviews were progressing well and an update would be provided at the October Cabinet meeting.

The financial position for the Council for the first quarter of the financial year (to 30th June 2024) highlighted a projected overspend of £3.9m against the budget, effectively the Council was on target to achieve the

transformation savings but further pressures had created a further budget gap. Growing demand for Council services and the increased cost of delivery was putting pressure on several budget headings. An additional £12.5m was added to the budget in February's budget report, and this overspend was over and above that additional investment. Work was underway to look at ways to mitigate this projected overspend and the position would continue to be closely monitored and managed throughout the remainder of the financial year. As part of the budget process, a number of earmarked reserves were paused to allow the Council to manage future risks and if the pressures materialise as expected, this would need to be met from these reserves.

These challenges were not unique to Stockton and the financial pressures experienced by many councils across the country was well documented. Whilst the Council was able to re-direct earmarked reserves to resolve immediate pressures this was not sustainable, over the medium term and the position needed to be addressed. Future reports would provide and update to Cabinet and work preparing for the 2025/26 budget and MTFP had commenced. Given the overall position, work exploring options for Phase 2 of the transformation programme would be progressed.

The report also presented an update on the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The update to the Medium Term Financial Plan and the current level of General Fund balances be noted along with the intention to progress further transformation reviews.
2. The revised Capital Programme at Appendix A of the report be noted.

CAB/40/24 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:-

TVCA Cabinet – 19 July 2024
SSP – 30 May 2024

RESOLVED that the above minutes be received.

CAB/41/24 Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint Delivery

Consideration was given to a report on the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint Delivery.

In July 2024 the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint, which sets out a vision and development framework for transformational change of this area over the next 25 years, was approved by Cabinet. The report

provided an update on specific projects within the Stockton Central and North Thornaby Blueprint area which were referenced in the July 2024 report and sought approval of funding to enable delivery and further progression of work as required.

The report highlighted the following areas:-

- Splash and Town Hall
- Municipal Quarter
- Democratic Space and Council Chamber
- Stockton Waterfront and Community Diagnostic Centre

Several other development sites and opportunities were identified within the Blueprint. To progress these sites and gain a greater level of detail and understanding, further work in the form of feasibility, development briefs and detailed design would be required, therefore it was recommended that an allocation of funding to support this additional work be made, with further detail on site specific work to be reported to future Cabinet meetings.

Following previous approvals in July 2023 and July 2024, it was recommended that remaining unallocated funding from previously approved sums is allocated as set out in table 1 within the report with authority delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Director of Corporate Services to agree all contracts, agreements and any variations between the allocation following further formal engagement with and procurement of contractors.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The budget allocation be approved as set out in table 1 of the report to support delivery of Town Hall redevelopment, Splash refurbishment, Council Chamber, Stockton Waterfront and Community Diagnostic Centre and further feasibility works linked to the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint.

2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Director of Corporate Services to agree all contracts, agreements and any variations between the allocation set out in table 1 of the report in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for or Regeneration and Housing and Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture following further formal engagement with, and procurement of contractors.

CAB/42/24 Accelerating Affordable Housing Delivery (A quality home for all)

Consideration was given to a report on Accelerating affordable housing delivery ('A quality home for all').

Government had recently announced an overhaul of the planning system to "fix the foundations and grow the economy". As part of this

announcement Government stated its ambition to increase the delivery of quality affordable and social housing and to bring forward investment to help deliver “the biggest increase in affordable house building in a generation”. The need to build affordable housing was recognised not only as an economic driver but a key enabler for local leaders to manage local pressures including tackling and preventing homelessness.

Like many local authorities the Council was experiencing increased demand for affordable housing (for sale and rent) and these pressures were being felt by multiply service areas (including homelessness, care leavers and vulnerable adults). Against this backdrop and to ensure the Council was best placed to meet the Governments housing growth agenda, specifically their commitment to increasing and diversifying housing supply an affordable housing delivery option appraisal had commenced. The option appraisal would explore opportunities for how the Council could increase the delivery of affordable housing, both in terms of numbers and speed of delivery. The report provided an overview of this appraisal.

The report highlighted the following areas:-

- Background – current housing demand
- Ongoing Place Select Committee scrutiny review
- The national agenda
- Affordable housing delivery option appraisal

RESOLVED that:-

1. The current pressures faced by the Council in terms of addressing our residents housing needs (as detailed in paragraph 1 of the report) be noted and the emerging findings of the current Place Select Committee ‘Affordable Housing Delivery’ scrutiny review (as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report) be noted.
2. The option appraisal which will explore the possibilities available to the Council to accelerate affordable housing delivery in the borough be and maximise inward investment to address current and projected housing need be supported.
3. Following the conclusion of recommendation 2, a further report be presented back to Cabinet.

CAB/43/24 Enhanced Mainstream Schools Consultation

Consideration was given to a report on Enhanced Mainstream Schools Consultation.

A consultation would be launched in September 2024 relating to the proposal to change Enhanced Mainstream Schools in Stockton-on-Tees to Additionally Resourced Provision and SEN Units, increasing the capacity within the Borough for school places for children with SEND and ensuring provision meets the needs of children locally.

A thirty-day consultation would launch on 9 September 2024 to include parents, schools and key stakeholders.

The proposal had been coproduced by a working group with key services within the council and Stockton Parent Carer Forum had been engaged in the proposals.

Parents and Carers would have an opportunity to meet with senior members of the SEND Services to discuss the proposal and open day listening events had been arranged during consultation period.

Following consultation, a decision would be required by Cabinet on the proposed model and the financial implications.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CAB/44/24 Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan.

Local authority partnerships had a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (YJSs). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnerships responsibilities in producing a plan. It stated that it was the duty of each local authority, in consultation with partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how YJSs in their area be provided and funded, how they would operate, and what functions would be carried out.

The Youth Justice Plan reports on the vision, strategy, governance, leadership and partnership arrangements. It reflected and built upon strong performance against key national performance measures. It documented key themes around child first principles, workforce development, diversion, exploitation and working with families. The Youth Justice Plan was produced after consultation with partners. The Plan documents seven key strategic objective for the forthcoming year as follows:-

- 1) Help children stay out of the criminal justice system.
- 2) To reduce reoffending.
- 3) Reduce the use of custody and prioritise effective resettlement.
- 4) Strengthen our responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation.
- 5) To reduce the number of school exclusions.
- 6) To refresh our practice in our work victims and restorative practice.
- 7) To develop a Participation model of practice.

A copy of the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan was attached to the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan be approved.

CAB/45/24 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

There was no specific appointments process prescribed in the Regulations or Guidance, save that the Council should appoint the Panel and consider the issues detailed at paragraphs 8 – 11 of the report.

The Regulations required a Panel of at least three members, however, the Council's Constitution stipulated that its Panel should comprise four members, with a quorum of 3. None of the Panel members must be serving elected Members of the authority in respect of which it makes recommendations, nor a member of a committee or sub-committee of such authority. Panel Members must also not be disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.

Guidance associated with the Regulations required appointing authorities to be satisfied that proposed Panel members would result in the Panel Membership being sufficiently independent and well qualified to discharge the Panel's functions, and representative of the diversity of communities in the Council's area.

The terms of office of Stockton's previous Independent Remuneration Panel expired on 31 May 2024. The Panel comprised the following non-elected members:

Tony Campbell
Kate Hoskin
Mark White
Terry Laing

Further details of the above non-elected members were attached to the report.

It was proposed that the previous members of the Panel, described above and attached to the report be reappointed.

The functions of the Panel were attached to the report. These were the functions prescribed by regulation and detailed in the Council's Constitution.

It was recommended that Council appoints a Chair. Tony Campbell was the Panel's previous Chair and had lots of experience in this role. It was recommended that he is appointed as the Chair of the Remuneration Panel.

It was recommended that the terms of office of the Panel Members be up to 31 May 2028, unless they were removed, resign or otherwise leave

office before then. This would enable preparations for a new Panel to be established (or for the incumbent panel to be re-appointed) during the first year of the new Council, after the 2027 elections.

Council had previously reserved the right to remove any one, or more, of the Panel Members at any time. This power should be retained.

It was proposed that the payments previously agreed for the Panel Members' work be retained. These were:-
Chair - £350 per day, subject to a maximum for each review of £1,750
Other Panel Members - £75 per day, subject to a maximum of £375 for each review; and All Panel Members – reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The previous members of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, as detailed in paragraph 4, and in Appendix 1 of the report, be reappointed, with their terms of office expiring on 31 May 2028.
2. The right be reserved to remove anyone, or more, of the Panel members at any time, as indicated in paragraph 10 of the report.
3. Tony Campbell be appointed as the Chair of the Panel.
4. The Panel's functions, as detailed in the Council's Constitution and Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.
5. The allowances for the Panel's work be as specified at paragraph 11 of the report be approved.