

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET/COUNCIL DECISION**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting ..... 17 October 2024

1. Title of Item/Report

Powering Our Future

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provides an update on the Powering Our Future Programme including:

- Transformation Powering Our Future – proposals for new ways of working and recommended options for the following reviews:
  - Waste Collection
  - Fees and Charges – Car Parking
  - Fees and Charges – School Meals
  - Fees and Charges - Non-residential care charge
  - Administration and Business Services – Courier Services
  - Community Safety and Regulatory Services.
  
- Communities Powering Our Future:
  - Building our intelligence, skills and experience
  - Rolling out an Appreciative Inquiry approach
  - Partnership working
  - Effective communication and Proud to Care campaign.
  
- Partnerships Powering Our Future:
  - Place Leadership Board
  - Business Ambassadors Group.
  
- Colleagues Powering Our Future – implementation of the Workforce Development Strategy.
  
- Regeneration Powering Our Future – work is taking place to re-frame this Mission with a focus on Place Making. Further detail would be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

The Powering our Future Programme continued to drive the Council plans to be a bold, brave and innovative Council and work with partners to make sure Stockton-on-Tees was a fair and equal place, where everyone is proud to live and work, where our communities flourish and

people feel they belong.

Significant progress had been made against all the Missions in the Programme, supporting the Council in the planned approach to carefully manage resources over the longer term. This would see the Council create a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that offer value for money and are valued by residents.

The Council approach continued to be iterative, building over time, to engage communities and undertake thorough reviews. This can avoid the need to make short-term cuts, which can be damaging to services and the residents.

The report provided an update on each of the Missions, for Cabinet comment and approval. Regular reports to Cabinet would ensure that the member-led approach drives the development and delivery of Powering Our Future.

This Mission would identify new and innovative ways of working that are better for communities and more efficient.

In April 2024, Cabinet agreed the scope for each of the Transformation Reviews in Phase 1 of the Programme. These provided clarity on the objectives for each project, in alignment with the Council's Mission Statement.

The reviews had moved into Discovery and Design stage. This work had led to a comprehensive understanding of organisational challenges, to develop and refine ideas for transformation making use of research, data and intelligence.

As part of this process, the Council had and continued to carry out extensive engagement with Members and colleagues to ensure robust challenge and feedback in shaping the change. This included:

- Members and Colleagues Marketplace Events (providing information about all Phase1 reviews)
- Colleagues Community of Practice sessions (managing interdependencies between projects across the programme)
- Member Briefings
- Informal Member Engagement Group (a cross-party group met in August to inform fees and charges reviews)
- Scrutiny Committees (the Scrutiny Programme for 2024-25 has been designed and agreed to inform reviews where areas of policy change are anticipated)

The findings relating to an initial tranche of reviews had been concluded. Drivers for change along with options, proposals and recommendations for transformation are summarised below.

In addition to the areas below, progress had been made in relation to:

- Discharge to Assess / Reablement – a new way of working is being progressed that would see the council de-commission current provision and reallocate resources for a more joined up approach to reablement. This would focus on supporting more people to live independently through a single-provider approach that makes every contact count and would support high performance of the local system, which was acknowledged as one of the best in the county. This is estimated to save up to £500,000.
- Placement Sufficiency Strategy – this operational strategy sets out our approach to provide a range of accommodation and support services that:
  - Keep children with their families of origin, wherever it is safe to do so.
  - Provide children with alternative, nurturing homes if they need short, or long-term alternative care or support arrangements.
  - Enable our children and young people with disabilities to live an ordinary life.
- Introduction of new practice for Children’s Services – this supports us in achieving the objectives set out as part of the placement sufficiency strategy and includes:
  - The creation of an Edge of Care Team designed to work intensively with individuals, siblings and families to maintain them in the family home rather than take them into care. The team has been successful in keeping children out of care, with 73 children and young people being supported by the team since January 2024.
  - The establishment of the Social Work academy and International Recruitment to address recruitment and retention issues.

An email from the Yarm Ward Councillors (Councillors John Coulson, Dan Fagan and Andrew Sherris) regarding the proposed car parking charges at Yarm was read out to Cabinet by Councillor Lynn Hall).

RESOLVED that:-

1. The recommended options set out in the report in respect of the Waste and Recycling Reviews be approved:

- Introduction of charging for green waste from 1st April 2025
- Introduction of weekly food waste and recycling service from 1st

April 2026 with the acquisition of associated vehicles and the development of a Waste Transfer Station

- Cease the provision of the Community Recycling Centres with immediate effect.

2. The removal of the maximum charge for non-residential care be approved.

3. An increase in the charges to schools for the provision of traded school meals service to reflect the true cost of the service provided be approved; and increase the per meal charge for Council maintained schools to £3 per meal to reflect the increased cost of provision be approved.

4. The introduction of Free School Meals auto-enrolment as detailed in paragraphs 71 and 72 of the report be approved.

5. The changes to car parking charges in Stockton and Yarm Town centres be approved; including the removal of the first hour free parking and introduction of the rate of £1.50 for three hours stay in short stay car parks, alongside an uplift to long stay car parking charges.

6. The operational changes in respect of Administration and Business Services, Community Safety and Regulatory Services set out in paragraphs 76 to 81 be noted.

7. The changes proposed will contribute £375,000 in 24/25, £2,296,000 in 25/26 and £4,644,000 in 26/27 towards the budget gap estimated within the budget report to Council in February 2024, at the same time as delivering improved outcomes, set out in the detail of the report be noted.

8. The progress updates for other aspects of the Transformation Mission outlined in paragraph 10 of the report be noted.

9. The progress updates for all other Missions of the Powering our Future Programme be noted.

Cabinet Recommended to Council:-

10. Council approve £4.3m prudential borrowing for the acquisition of food and recycling waste receptacles, green waste bins, site preparation costs for a Waste Transfer Station and resurfacing of Wellington Square car park.

### 3. Reasons for the Decision

Cabinet is recommended to agree the updates and recommendations to ensure that the Council continues to deliver its commitment to the

Powering Our Future Missions; to address the financial challenges we face at the same time as improving outcomes for communities, including:

- Creation of opportunities to build brighter futures for our communities and reduce inequality, using the limited amount of money we have available.
- Carefully managing our resources, creating a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that are valued by our residents.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight Friday 25 October 2024 for resolutions 1 to 9 only.

Proper Officer