

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021**

CABINET

Tuesday, 4 May 2021

PRESENT – Councillors Mrs H Scott (Chair), Clarke, Dulston, Johnson, Keir, Marshall, Mills and K Nicholson

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, Harker, Snedker and Tait

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors C L B Hughes and A J Scott

C127 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**C128 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE
GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.**

In respect of Minutes C131(1) and (2) below, representations were made at the meeting by the Chairs of the respective Review Groups.

**C129 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON
TUESDAY, 13 APRIL 2021**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 13 April 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C130 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters referred back for re-consideration to this meeting.

C131 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1) EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chair of the Effects of the Pandemic on Children and Young People Review Group submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the outcome and findings of the Review Group established by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to examine the effects of the pandemic on children and young people and requesting that consideration be given to the recommendations contained within its final report.

The Chair of the Review Group addressed Cabinet in respect of the work undertaken

by that Scrutiny Committee in conducting the review and outlined the findings and recommendations of the review.

The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder acknowledged the need for improved communication in respect of the offer for children and young people in Darlington and outlined the work currently being undertaken to support the recommendations.

RESOLVED – (a) That the recommendations of the Effects of the Pandemic on Children and Young People Review Group, as detailed in the submitted report, be endorsed.

(b) That the thanks of Cabinet be extended to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for their contribution to the Review.

(c) That the thanks of Cabinet be extended to the children and young people for their participation in the Review.

REASON – To ensure that all partners work together to support and improve services for the ongoing effects of the pandemic on children and young people.

(2) **JOINT AUTISM JOINT REVIEW GROUP**

The Chair of the Joint Autism Review Group submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the outcome and findings of the Joint Review Group established to examine the autism provision within the Council and requesting that consideration be given to the recommendations of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair of the Review Group presented the report on behalf of that Scrutiny Committee, outlining the key themes and recommendations. Reference was made to the work previously undertaken in relation to making Darlington an autism friendly town.

Particular reference was made to the importance of representation from the Children and Young People and Adults Scrutiny Committees on the Working Group.

RESOLVED – (a) That the recommendation of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee that a cross party Autism Working Group be established to progress the key themes identified by the Joint Autism Review Group, be endorsed.

(b) That the governance arrangements for the Cross Party Autism Working Group, as detailed below, be agreed:-

- (i) that the Cross Party Autism Working Group meet bi-monthly;
- (ii) that all interested Members be invited to join the Working Group; and
- (iii) that the Cross Party Autism Working Group report to Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

REASON – To enable Cabinet to consider the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

C132 KEY DECISION - CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/24

The Cabinet Member with Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Service (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021/24 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that the Council's Housing Services had a long and successful track record of engaging with and involving tenants in the delivery of housing services; a key strand of the new Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards covered 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment'; those standards stated that the Council must consult its tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of its housing service; and that the Customer Engagement Strategy for 2021/24 set out the process for how the Council would involve and empower its tenants, including how the engagement activities would be monitored and reported.

It was reported that the Customer Engagement Strategy focused on four specific themes; an annual Engagement Plan would support specific actions within the strategy; and where possible, opportunities for engagement would be promoted through digital channels, whilst always providing more traditional methods of engagement through surveys, telephone contact and face to face meetings.

It was also reported that the Customer Engagement Strategy had already been considered by the Tenant's Board and the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee and that regular updates on the progress against the strategy would be provided to the Tenants Board and reported to the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – (a) That the contents of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021/24, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(c) That the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio, to make amendments to the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021/24 in respect of engagement with children and young people in Council properties.

REASONS – (a) The Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing providers to involve and empower our tenants in the delivery of housing services.

(b) The adoption of a formal Customer Engagement Strategy is the best way to demonstrate how we will achieve this and allows formal reporting and monitoring of engagement activities through the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee.

C133 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**DECISIONS DATED –
TUESDAY 11 MAY 2021**