

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

12 December 2023

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Martin-Wells (In the Chair)

Councillors Brown, Clayton, Creevy, Lindridge and Young

Councillor Allen was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Hargreaves.

Officers: Tony Hanson, Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Israr Hussain, Economic Growth Team Manager
Steve Hilton, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team

Also in attendance – Andrew Graves, Director, Ortus Economic Research Limited.

11. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Hargreaves

12. Declarations of Interest

None.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 were received.

14. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2026/27 *(Director of Finance, IT & Digital and Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the MTF5 and to enable the Committee to scrutinise / comment on the savings proposals referred from the Finance and Policy Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services outlined details of the salient issues included in the report submitted to the Finance and Policy Committee on 27 November 2023. The Executive Director also outlined the proposals for services within this Committee's remit, as detailed in Appendix C to the report.

It was highlighted that Officers were also reviewing operational decisions across their service areas in order to maximise income and efficiency whilst considering the merit of non-essential duties in order to ensure their budgets balance.

Decision

That as requested by Finance and Policy Committee the Committee considered the recommended 2023/24 savings proposed detailed in Annex A - Appendix C relating to the services within this Committees portfolio and Members made the following comments to be reported back to Finance and Policy Committee on 22 January 2024 in relation to each of the savings proposed.

Budget Reduction Heading	Budget Reduction 2024/25 £000	Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee comments
Fees and Charges Increase in line with September CPI	250	No specific comments were made.

15. Hartlepool Business Start Ups *(Assistant Director – Development and Growth)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To report the findings on Hartlepool's business start-up rates that includes a yearly historic comparison, along with a comparison to other Tees Valley

Local Authorities and also benchmarking against other areas to identify best practice.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Hartlepool Inclusive Growth Strategy, that had been approved by this Committee in January 2023, noted the comparatively higher failure rates of new businesses start-ups in the Borough, especially within the first three years of trading and a question was asked of why this was the case. Together with colleagues from the North East Enterprise Agency Ltd (NEEAL), the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and other Tees Valley Council's, a study had been procured and commissioned to develop intelligence related to the business start-up rates and demography in the Tees Valley area and to benchmark against similar identified areas, thereby enabling points of difference and examples of best practice to be identified. The research had been undertaken by Newcastle based Ortus Economic Research and completed in April 2023. The methodology included both desk research analysing secondary data and primary research through consultation with partners and stakeholders who engaged in providing advice and support to new business start-ups.

The research data and findings had been presented in the final report by Ortus Economic Research, which was appended to the report, and were set out in the Committee report together with details of the recommendations.

Israr Hussain introduced Andrew Graves, Director, Ortus Economic Research Limited who would be making a presentation to the Committee. The background to the report was outlined in the context of the link to the Hartlepool Inclusive Growth Strategy. The presentation then focused on the aims and objectives of the study, key statistics, factors affecting start up and survival of businesses and recommendations of the report.

During the presentation, elected members sought clarification and asked questions of Mr Graves arising from the presentation including issues associated with Coastal Communities which experience low business density and differences in survival rates of registered businesses, unregistered businesses and the self-employed. Questions also related to the impact of the Mayoral Development Corporation, communication with students/graduates and the merits of considering creating an Enterprise Board when a Business Forum already existed. Following a question from the Executive Director, Mr Graves undertook to come back with a definitive answer relating to categorisation if a business moves.

Decision

The Committee noted the findings and recommendations of the business start-up research study and agreed that the Economic Growth Team consider the delivery of each of the identified recommendations of the study with business support partners and organisations including the Tees Valley Combined Authority. This will include the new Tees Valley Business

Solutions service as well as the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund support for the Tees Valley.

The meeting concluded at 11.05 a.m.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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