

# **CABINET**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

22 January 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am in the Avondale Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).

Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),

Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods & Communities Portfolio Holder),

Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder),

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services  
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)  
Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor  
Alison Mawson, Head of Community Safety and Prevention  
Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement and Property Services  
Paul Briggs, Assistant Director Children's Services  
Sue Johnson, Children's Services  
Tom Britcliffe, Principal Planning Officer  
Phil Hepburn, Parking Manager  
Alistair Rae, Public Relations  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillors Mike Turner, Carl Richardson and David Young – Ward Councillors

### **183. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Pamela Hargreaves and Robbie Payne.

### **184. Declarations of interest by members**

None.

**185. Confirmation of the minutes of the meetings held on 21 December 2007 and 7 January 2008**

Confirmed

**186. Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents – Preferred Options Report** *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

**Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Purpose of report**

To deal with the preparation of a joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents by the Joint Strategy Unit, on behalf of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Councils. Specifically the report sought approval of the Preferred Options Report for issue as public consultation documents for the statutory period 20 February to 2 April 2008.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor reported on the preferred options report that represented the second stage of preparing the Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents. The report identified the preferred options from the previous issues and options stage and following public consultation and subsequent amendment they would be taken forward to the submission stage. The preferred options report provided a strategy and consequent policies for managing minerals and waste development and provided spatial planning options for dealing with these. Public consultation would allow communities, organisations and businesses to have their say on what options should be used in the Tees Valley to deal with minerals and waste issues, identify any further issues and help decide whether the preferred options were sound or whether they needed amending for the next stage.

Publication of the Preferred Options Report was a statutory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The report was timetabled to be published for the required 6 week public consultation period 20 February to 2 April 2008 and was a key milestone in the Hartlepool Local Development Scheme (LDS). Publication of the Submission DPD Report in January 2009 for a further statutory 6 week public consultation was the next key milestone.

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Option Appraisal Report of all of the preferred options would accompany the Preferred Options Report and would be used to assess the performance of the options against baseline conditions identified within the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.

## Decision

That the Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Preferred Options Report and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Option Appraisal Report be noted and approved for issue for public consultation for the statutory period 20 February to 2 April 2008.

### **187. Proposed Residents Permit Cost Increases** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non key

#### **Purpose of report**

To consider representations made concerning the new increased charges in relation to residents' only permits.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder referred to a meeting of Cabinet held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2007 when consideration was given to reviewing the cost of the residents parking scheme. The scheme has been operating some 8 years, and was introduced to protect residential zones, from the displacement of commuter traffic, wishing to avoid paying for parking in designated commuter car parks. The controlled parking zone had grown significantly since 1999 and as well as the town centre areas expanding, permit controls were now also in place in Seaton Carew and in areas close to the Hospital.

The cost of a permit had remained at a nominal £1 charge whilst the administrative and enforcement costs have been subsidised from the pay and display income the service recovered. Cabinet Members had suggested that this element of the service should be self financing and that the anticipated £80,000 costs should be met by the residents themselves. In addition the cabinet report also examined ways of reducing the administrative costs associated with the renewal process and proposed that permits should be renewed on a biennial basis.

Cabinet members recognised that the need to provide permit controlled zones originated from the introduction of pay and display charges and that areas closest to the town centre car parks were therefore in greatest need of protection. To this extent they proposed a two tier permit charge dependant on location. The proposed discounted central zone was outlined in **Appendix A** of this report. Members also proposed that the cost of a permit should be increased to £20 per permit but properties within the discounted zone should be subsidised by £15 effectively making the charge in this area £5.

The publicity of the proposed permit cost increases and the formal

advertising of the public notices, led to the receipt of many objections and several signed petitions from residents. In many cases the petitions also indicated that if the charge were to be adopted residents would rather see permit controls removed than pay the proposed higher charge. As a result and to assess if this view was reflective of the majority of permit holders, a consultation letter was sent to over 1,000 permit households in the proposed higher band. The consultation was carried out over a three week period and the results were summarised in **Appendix B** of this report.

The consultation informed residents of the background to the proposed cost increase and asked specifically :-

- 1) “would you be prepared to pay the proposed additional permit charge?”
- 2) “if the charge was introduced would you wish opt out of the scheme?”

Some residents considered they were unable to support either option and made alternative suggestions and/or possible improvements to the scheme, details of which were set out in the report. As a result of consultation feedback various options, as outlined in the report, were considered.

The administrative and enforcement costs of the resident parking zones were estimated to be £80,000 per annum. At present revenue from permit holders equated to £6,000 and historically this balance had been met from the pay and display revenue income which in recent years had shown a loss against budget. The financial impact was very much dependant on the options as set out in the report. Any deviance from the costs proposed by Cabinet would be required to be met from the parking services budget creating a budget pressure.

A Ward Member for the Grange Ward expressed concerns that whilst feedback from some residents in his ward had indicated support for the scheme, some residents were not happy to pay the proposed additional permit charges and felt that the proposal of a £20 charge in some areas of the town and £5.00 in others was unfair. It was considered that this level of increase was too high and Cabinet were requested to consider incremental increases and continue to subsidise the scheme for one year.

A Seaton Ward Member highlighted concerns that the proposed residents permit costs were too high, some residents felt there were no benefits from the scheme and this was a form of tax. It was suggested that further consultation be undertaken and the views of residents be taken on board.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the cost implications of continuing to subsidise the scheme, the pressures that would be placed on the Neighbourhood Services budget, whether the benefits of the scheme outweighed the costs and if the consultation process had been successful.

Members discussed whether it was appropriate that this scheme should be subsidised in the same way as other services provided. Whilst Cabinet Members accepted residents concerns that an increase to £20.00 per annum may appear excessive the importance of residents being made aware of the level of subsidy from the Council was highlighted.

In discussions relating to the income generated from fines, the need to tighten up on debt recovery procedures was suggested. The possibility of utilising funding from the General Fund with income from fines being transferred to the General Fund was considered. The Director of Neighbourhood Services highlighted the potential reduction in income as a result of a possible increase in the number of residents opting out of the scheme.

Following further debate, Members supported the suggestion that a £5.00 initial charge be implemented across the town but that a further incremental increase would apply to all residents outside of the subsidised zone. The proposed charge would increase to £20.00 per annum over a 3 year period and would include the option for residents affected to opt-out of the scheme. It was also suggested that residents affected be reconsulted on this proposal, the outcome of which to be reported to Cabinet. It was noted that as this proposal would not address the budget deficit, the funding implications needed to be explored, the details of which to be considered by Cabinet in six weeks time.

#### **Decision**

- (i) That the residents affected by the higher charge be reconsulted on the following proposal:-

An initial £5.00 per annum charge with further phased incremental increases over a 3 year period to £20.00 with the option to opt-out of the scheme.

- (ii) That the financial implications of the above proposals be explored and the results of the consultation be considered by Cabinet in 6 weeks time.

### **188. Sea Wall Breach Opposite the Green at Seaton Carew** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non key

#### **Purpose of report**

To detail the breach/promenade collapse incident on 27 November 2007 resulting in injuries to a member of the public and possible insurance claim.

To seek approval for the all toe protection works in the budget sum of £98k

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder presented the report which contained details of the collapse of the promenade due to a sea wall breach which occurred on 27 November 2007 together with the recommendation for further work. The report included details of temporary works that were carried out on 28 November, proposed short and long term works together with approximate costs.

The incident could result in a significant insurance claim for personal injury against the Council. The Council had a statutory obligation as the Coast Protection Authority to ensure that the protection structures were maintained in a safe and acceptable condition.

Whilst Members were happy to approve the works, it was considered that the funding should be allocated from budget reserves.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the proposed works be approved.
- (ii) That funding for the works be allocated from budget reserves.

## **189. Local Involvement Networks (LINKS)** *(Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

To update Cabinet on the progress with procurement of the LINKs host with neighbouring authorities and to seek Cabinet's views on how to proceed.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Adult and Public Health Portfolio Holder outlined the current position regarding procurement with the neighbouring authorities and the options for procurement in the light of Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland option out of the Tees-wide procurement process. The background to the approach to a Teeswide procurement was outlined in the report. Members were advised that events had overtaken since the report was written and Middlesbrough had decided to pursue a single LA Links host procurement option.

### **Decision**

That a single LA links host procurement option for Hartlepool be pursued.

## **190. Draft CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) Strategy** *(Head of Community Safety and Prevention)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

To update Cabinet on progress made in developing a CCTV Strategy for the town.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor presented the report which gave brief details of the CCTV camera system in Hartlepool and revenue funding sources. The draft strategy, attached at Appendix A, identified several issues which required further consideration before the strategy was finalised:-

- 1) The ageing cameras required increasing maintenance and repairs. This was an increasing cost on the annual revenue budget. A request for additional budget allocation had been made for 2008/09.
- 2) The monitoring arrangements were subject to a Service Level Agreement with Housing Hartlepool, which ended in March 2009.
- 3) The current staffing capacity in the monitoring centre would be less effective if further cameras were added to the system.
- 4) Rather than continuing to add more cameras to the system, cameras could be decommissioned on a one for one basis. Alternatively the strategic significance of each camera site could be considered, and decommissioning of less important cameras undertaken.
- 5) Technology continued to develop and therefore opportunities for different solutions to signal transmission, for example, become available. This could be more efficient than the current provision.
- 6) Current Council policy was to maintain the camera system for the benefit of the community and not to seek to generate income from monitoring other organisation's camera systems. However this could reduce Council costs.

Members suggested that a detailed scrutiny investigation be undertaken on the provision of a suitable CCTV system for Hartlepool to include examination of other organisations camera systems and explore the camera system currently operated in Middlesbrough.

## **Decision**

- (i) That the information given, be noted.
- (ii) That a scrutiny investigation be undertaken on an appropriate CCTV camera system for Hartlepool with recommendations to be reported to Cabinet in three months time.

## **191. Public Convenience Provision in Hartlepool and the Development of Seaton Carew Clock Tower and Shelter** (Director of Neighbourhood Services )

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

To provide Cabinet with a position statement in respect of development and procurement of public conveniences and make further recommendations.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services presented the report which outlined the progress of works on public conveniences and included a list of revised recommendations, with a position statement for each scheme, including financial projections. The report also linked with the refurbishment of the Seaton Carew Clock Tower and Shelter. This was a matter that affected Council assets and the community of Hartlepool and visitors.

Reference was made to a recent scrutiny investigation when concerns were expressed regarding the proposed reduction in toilet facilities on the Marina and the need to extend disabled access toilet facilities generally. The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that a strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the coming months in relation to public convenience provision across the town.

## **Decision**

- i) Cabinet noted progress on public convenience provision.
- ii) Cabinet noted the development and refurbishment of the Seaton Carew Clock Tower and Shelter.
- ii) Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:-
  - a) That the public conveniences at the Rocket House should now be demolished with the area being landscaped and the Clock Tower toilets refurbished as part of the master plan for the area in conjunction with



the structural concrete repairs.

- b) That the Hartlepool Maritime Experience toilet block should be retained and adapted for use by the museums service as storage space.
- c) That the Seaton Baths facility be demolished the area being made good and landscaped to match the existing with a new facility being built near the car park adjacent the Newburn Bridge.
- d) That the existing toilet facility within Ward Jackson Park be retained and upgraded to current standards

**192. Seaton Carew Asset Management Issues** *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Director of Neighbourhood Services and Director of Adult and Community Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non key

**Purpose of report**

The report referred to various Council land holdings at Seaton Carew and the potential benefits which may be secured from the marketing and development of those land holdings. Possible approaches to marketing those assets were outlined to enable Cabinet to consider the way forward.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor provided details of a range of community needs/opportunities which had been identified from a variety of studies and discussions which included affordable housing, community facilities, visitor attractions and capital receipts as set out in the report.

Reference was made to a range of property assets at Seaton Carew which included the site off Elizabeth Way, Seaton Carew Park and Library site, Seaton Sands and the site off Coronation Drive which might be considered for a co-ordinated marketing approach to secure developer interest in responding to those needs and opportunities, details of which were included in the report.

In response to the Mayor's query in relation to timescales for completion of this exercise, the Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that it would be prudent to consult on draft marketing proposals with local stakeholders and the public at large and then report back to Cabinet. Members were advised that since the report was submitted, the PCT had indicated interest in the provision of primary care and community facilities. In relation to the site off Elizabeth Way, it was reported that the opportunity to incorporate the caretaker's house and garden within the potential development, as indicated in the report, did not appear to be an

option as originally envisaged.

Concerns were expressed in relation to the disused Longscar Centre to which the Mayor advised that this would be addressed by the Derelict Land and Buildings Group.

Following a Member's request for clarification regarding the potential number of housing units to be developed, the Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that the number of units was yet to be determined. The need to ensure that existing facilities were replaced before current facilities were demolished was highlighted. It was suggested that details of future development proposals be reported to Cabinet. The Assistant Director provided assurances that any new facilities would not be at the expense of current facilities and developers would be selected based on content, quality and financial issues.

### **Decision**

That officers be authorised to consult local stakeholders and the public on draft marketing particulars and report to a future meeting of Cabinet on proposals in the light of that consultation.

## **193. Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

To present the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services provided by Ofsted.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder presented the report which included background information as well as the process on the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services. The Council had maintained its Grade 3 rating for Children's Services which was given at the time of the Joint Area Review (March 2007). It was judged to be delivering consistently above minimum requirements with good capacity for further improvement. A letter which summarised the outcomes was attached at Appendix 1.

The following areas for development were agreed with Ofsted having already been identified in the Children and Young People's Plan review and as part of the self assessment for Annual Performance Assessment.

- Be Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving

- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

**Decision**

That the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services, be noted.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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