

REGENERATION AND LIVEABILITY PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

15 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House School, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond)

Officers: Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning
Derek Gouldbum, Urban Policy Manager
Catherine Frank, Principal Community Strategy Officer
Jeff Mason, Head of Support Services
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

33. North Sea Interreg Project – Coast Alive (*Urban Policy Manager*)

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

The report sought approval to Hartlepool Borough Council's participation in a North Sea 'Interreg' project based around the improved use and promotion of the North Sea coastal cycleway and footpath network.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

For the past three years the Council had been involved in the European Interreg Programme which focussed on international collaboration in issues relating to the regeneration of coastal towns. This programme had now come to an end after supporting significant projects in Hartlepool and a formal evaluation report relating to the scheme would be presented to a future Portfolio meeting.

A new Interreg funding programme was now in place for the next 5 years and officers were currently exploring opportunities for involving the town. However in the meantime, the Council had been invited to participate in a

regionally led Interreg project based around the North Sea Footpath and cycleway networks. This aimed to improve and encourage greater use of the cycle and walking coastal pathways throughout the year rather than merely in the summer, thereby improving health, reducing obesity, increasing tourism and providing better resources for the local population.

The project which will also include the development of a dedicated website would have promotional benefits for the town particularly with the Tall Ships event in mind. The cost of the project ranged between £9,500 in cash and £9,500 in kind up to £13,800 in cash and £13,800 in kind per year over the 3 year period. This would be matched 50/50 with European Interreg funding. Sources for the Council's cash contribution were still to be determined but it was envisaged that currently budgeted resources could be used to provide the match funding.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved in principle the involvement of Hartlepool Borough Council in the North Sea Interreg Project and authorised officers to negotiate specific terms of participation, including financial implications and report back to the Portfolio Holder.

34. Revision of the Housing Relocation Assistance Policy *(Director of Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

The report reviewed housing relocation assistance available to residents within housing regeneration areas in Hartlepool, specifically that relating to owner occupiers.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

In 2003 the Council was successful in securing funding from English Partnerships and the North East Housing Board to support a programme of housing market renewal in Dyke House/Jackson ('north central Hartlepool') to tackle housing market imbalances in this part of the town. Other housing regeneration activity was also being progressed in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) area of west central Hartlepool at the same time.

Housing Relocation Assistance is a discretionary payment paid to owner occupiers whose home is within area subject to housing clearance and redevelopment proposals and is in addition to the market value of the property and statutory home loss payment that is required, in order to enable such homeowners to relocate to a similar property within the

Borough.

A financial assistance package was established in 2003/4 which reflected general house prices at that time. The payment is repayable on a pro-rata basis if the homeowner moved again within five years. Since the policy was adopted the housing market in Hartlepool has changed significantly with price increases across all sectors of the market.

Under current circumstances when a 'like for like' move option is considered a cap exists which was often significantly greater than the £7,400 Housing Relocation Assistance currently available. It was estimated that for a homeowner to move to another property on a 'like for like' basis, covering costs incurred with moving and some updating costs, up to £15,000 would now be needed.

In order to help bridge this gap it was proposed that the relocation assistance payment was increased to a maximum of £15,000 from April 2008. This would be payable on a 50% grant basis of up to £7,500 repayable on a pro rata basis if the property is sold in the first 5 years, and an additional 50% loan of up to £7,500 which would be repaid to the Council when the property is sold or the owner-occupier 'staircases' up. (i.e. where the owner-occupier chooses to repay the loan element of the relocation assistance thereby discharging the charge on the property) This approach would be in keeping with possible changes being considered for the private housing sector grants and loans system for housing improvement from April 2008 (i.e. a system based on a 50:50 grant/loan arrangement). Any re-paid loan would be ring fenced and paid into the Housing Capital Fund for recycling.

There are no immediate direct financial implications to the Council; the funding for the housing market renewal programme comes from capital programmes funded by Central Government via the Regional Housing Board and Tees Valley Living, the sub-regional housing market restructuring partnership. It would however put an additional pressure on this 'external' capital funding, although some of this would eventually be recycled as loans are repaid in future years when property is either sold or owners staircase up to full ownership.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder agreed that the Housing Relocation Assistance Policy be revised in accordance with the details outlined in the report.

35. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) 2007/8 *(Principal Community Strategy Officer)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report was to update the Portfolio Holder on the amendments made to the Health & Care, Community Safety and Jobs & Economy NRF theme programmes. The Portfolio Holder was also requested to give delegated authority to the Head of Community Strategy to approve new activities in the current year up to the value of £20,000 to ensure the 2007/8 NRF allocation was fully utilised.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Cabinet agreed the final 2007/8 NRF programme on the 25th June 2007 within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Outturn 2006/7 report. The NRF grant was included within that report as from April 2007 the NRF grant has been pooled within the LAA Grant. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in October 2007 announced that NRF would not continue beyond March 2008 and Government Office has confirmed that the NRF grant must be spent in full by 31st March 2008 with no flexibility to carry forward unspent funding into 2008/9. In January the Portfolio Holder agreed for Theme Partnerships to have delegated authority to agree modifications within their 2007/8 NRF programmes in order for them to be able to respond quickly and utilise the funding effectively. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder would be informed of any modifications that were made at future meetings.

A number of projects within the Health & Care theme have identified that they will underspend in 2007/8. The Health & Care Strategy Group have agreed the following variations to projects:

- MIND – Mental Health awareness training for GPs to enable patients with mental illness to better engage with their GPs.
- Health Trainers – support towards the Information Now website to provide accessible information on local services.
- Owton Rossmere Health Development Worker – support towards the Solid Rock Youth Project outreach work, Manor Residents Association elderly luncheon club, Manor West youth activities, Weight Management Service, Owton Dance Club, Sure Start South, Mental Health Matters healthy eating and cooking skills and ORCEL Health Awareness Day.

A £7,000 underspend remained in the Health & Care theme and the Health & Care Strategy Group would be discussing uses for this funding at their next meeting.

An underspend of £12,000 had been identified within the Community Safety Theme. The Safer Hartlepool Partnership had agreed to utilise the underspend on the following activities to respond to criminal damage issues:

- Improvements to security at Speeding Drive and Nicholson's field allotments;
- Research into criminal damage;
- Police/PCSO presence at criminal damage hot-spots;
- Increase Mill House skate park lighting from 2 to 5 nights per week until the end of March 2008.

The Portfolio Holder agreed 2 new projects in January to utilise part of the £20,000 underspend in the Jobs & Economy theme. The Economic Forum agreed at their meeting in January to allocate the identified underspend of £9,000 to the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership. This would be used to commission and produce a comprehensive research document to inform the strategic development of the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership.

The report referred to funding which has already been allocated and sets out a proposal to ensure that the full allocation is utilised before the grant fund ends on 31st March 2008.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the amendments made to the Health & Care, Community Safety and Jobs & Economy theme programmes and gave delegated authority to the Head of Community Strategy to approve new activities in the current year up to the value of £20,000.

36. Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan 2007/8 – Quarter 3 Monitoring Report (Head of Support Services)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

The report is made to inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Regeneration and Planning Services Departmental Plan in 2007/8 in the third quarter of the year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report showed details of progress against actions contained in the Departmental Plan and the third quarter outturn of key performance indicators. Several key departmental achievements attained thus far during the year were also highlighted. A total of 69 actions had been achieved and a further 78 were expected to be completed by the milestone dated. However 18 of the actions were described as not being on target, a number

of which were highlighted to the Portfolio Holder in the Quarter 2 performance report.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the progress against key actions and the third quarter outturn of performance indicators.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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