

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

25 April 2008

The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Officer
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

48. Viewpoint – Citizen’s Panel Results *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

The report was presented in order to inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 23rd phase of Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council’s Citizen’s Panel which was distributed in October 2007.

Items for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Viewpoint is one of the ways that the Authority consults with and involves local people in the governance of Hartlepool. It is a statistically balanced panel of local people who receive questionnaires at regular intervals throughout the year, asking for their views on a variety of local issues facing the Council and Hartlepool as a whole.

Viewpoint’s aim is to ensure that the Council listens to the community and involves local people in the Council’s decision making. There are often important issues on which the Council needs to consult the local population and discover what the community’s priorities are for the future.

Each phase of View point covers various topics and within this phase there were questions on:-

Hartbeat
Trading Standards
Perception of Crime
Neighbourhood Watch

Climate Change Contact Point

A copy of the overall report has also been placed in the members' library, in all public libraries across the Borough for public access as well as the Council's website.

There was positive feedback regarding Hartbeat and suggestions for the publication would be taken on board. Perception of Crime has improved in terms of those respondents who felt very or fairly safe and this is fed back to the Safe in Hartlepool Partnership.

It was clarified that there had been a delay in submitting the previous Viewpoint survey results but these would normally be fed back to the Portfolio on a regular basis throughout the year.

The Portfolio Holder asked whether the relevant departments were informed of the results of survey. She was informed that departments submit a number of topics to be included in the survey and then if these are selected for inclusion in the survey, the results and any issues raised would be fed back to the department who would prepare any required response. The Viewpoint members would then receive a newsletter giving the results of the survey. It was noted that the Police and Fire Authorities had in the past used Viewpoint to gauge public perception.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the results of the survey.

49. Skills Pledge Action Plan *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

The report was presented to inform the Portfolio Holder of the action plan drafted to meet the requirement of the Skills Pledge.

Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A review of the United Kingdom's long term skills needs was commissioned by the Government in 2004 and the final report of the Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, was published in December 2006. This Review showed that the UK must urgently raise achievements at all levels of skills and recommended that it commit to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020 which would mean doubling attainment at most levels. Responsibility for achieving ambitions must be shared between Government, employers and individuals.

Employers nationally were asked to voluntarily sign a 'skills pledge' committing them to the vision described by Lord Leitch. In June 2007 Hartlepool Borough Council made both the national and regional skills pledge at events organised by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), being the first Council to do so.

The Workforce Development Strategy 2007-2012 published in April 2007 had already identified that action at a corporate level was required to audit the workforce to identify those employees without a first NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualification and make provision for this to be rectified.

The Skills Pledge is in two parts; the first being the declaration that the council made in June 2007 and the second is the production of an action plan, submitted to the LSC which is to be assessed for suitability, capability and effectiveness. The contents of the action plan had been circulated for consultation with relevant officers and the trade union before endorsement by the Corporate Management Team. Monitoring and reporting on the action plan was the responsibility of the Corporate Workforce Development Team and the plan would be updated regularly to reflect progress, new initiatives and outcomes.

The Portfolio Holder asked where this fitted in with other action plans and was informed that much of the work required for achieving the Skills Pledge was work that the Council had already intended undertaking. The Portfolio Holder asked what the intended outcome was and the Chief Personnel Officer stated that initially the target would be for all employees to gain at least NVQ2 and eventually when this goal had been achieved, employees would be encouraged to attain NVQ3. Following this achievement the aim was to maintain employees interest in developing their skills.

It was clarified for the Portfolio Holder that all employers, not merely Public Sectors had been asked to participate in the Skills Pledge and Hartlepool Borough Council was one of the first Local Authorities to sign up to the Pledge at its national launch.

The LSC would receive regular monitoring reports and there would be updates submitted to the Portfolio Holder via the annual and half-yearly workforce development reports.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder endorsed the action plan and agreed to receive progress updates via the annual and half yearly workforce development reports.

**P DEVLIN
ACTING CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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