

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

21 July 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves (Deputy Mayor)
Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)
Robbie Payne (Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holder)
Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods & Communities Portfolio Holder)
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer
Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services
Richard Waldmeyer, Team Leader, Planning Policy and Information
Julian Heward, Public Relations
Linda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

58. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cath Hill, Children's Services Portfolio Holder.

59. Declarations of interest by members

None.

60. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2008

Confirmed.

61. Changes to Timetable for the Preparation of the Local Development Framework (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Non key

Purpose of report

To advise members that Government Office for the North East has recommended that the timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy and related documents be delayed to take account of new Planning Policy Statement 12 and the new Town and Country Planning Regulations which come into force from 1 September 2008.

To seek approval to a revision of the timetable for the preparation of the Hartlepool Local Development Framework, precise details of which will be presented to a future cabinet meeting.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided background to the production of the Hartlepool Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out a rolling programme for the Council's proposals for producing policy documents over the next three years. The Mayor reported that following discussions with Government Office for the North East it had been suggested by them that the Core Strategy which was the key document in the new Local Development Scheme be delayed to enable:-

- (i) The new procedures contained in the new Town and Country Planning Regulations coming into force on 1 September 2008 and in new Government Planning Policy Statement 12 to be reflected in the process.
- (ii) The evidence based used in the Local Development Framework preparation to be thoroughly prepared so it was as robust as possible in light of experience elsewhere in the country in ensuring LDFs were found to be 'sound'.

Decision

- (i) That the changes to the Town and Country Planning Regulations, be noted.
- (ii) That the Local Development Scheme, setting out the programme for the Local Development Framework preparation, be revised to

take account of new Town and Country Planning Regulations and to reflect advice given to the authority by Government Office for the North East.

- (iii) That details of the revised Local Development Scheme be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

62. Network Management Plan *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Key decision test (ii) applies

Purpose of report

To outline the key elements of the Council's first Network Management Plan and to secure the endorsement of this framework document.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder presented the report which contained background information to the Council's statutory network management duty under Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, to secure the expeditious movement of traffic and to ensure that measures imposed did not have a negative effect on the highway network of neighbouring authorities. At a strategic level, this would help reinforce existing links between transport policy, highways operations and service provisions, whilst balancing the needs of vehicle movement with the needs of other road users.

It was predicted that congestion would increase in future years and the demands of travel for the residents of Hartlepool would also rise. At certain times "key" routes on the network were already operating at full capacity. The Council and its partners would need to manage this demand and this was reflected in the strategies outlined in the Local Transport Plan. Further issues for consideration were provided as set out in the report.

The draft Network Management Plan framework document included the following key elements:-

- Introduction, objectives and purpose of plan;
- Context, local, regional and national requirements;
- Arrangements for Network Management Duty; the operational responsibilities, organisation structure;
- Performing the Network Management Duty, road user needs, co-ordination, systems and procedures;
- Performance and review; satisfying Department for Transport performance requirements

Decision

- (i) That the Framework Document, be endorsed.

- (ii) That any further changes that might be needed to the Framework Document prior to final submission to the Department of Transport, be delegated to the Head of Technical Services acting in consultation with the Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder.

63. Corporate Plan 2008/9 (Assistant Chief Executive)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Cabinet to consider and comment on the proposed Corporate Plan for 2008/09.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Performance Portfolio Holder reported that, as in previous years, the Corporate Plan was presented in two parts. Part 1, attached at Appendix A to the report, was the main plan, and described the Council's priorities for 2008/9, including how weaknesses would be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. Part 2 of the plan, attached at Appendix B to the report, contained detailed supporting information relating to performance statistics that the Council was required to publish. This included the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for 2007/08 and new National Indicators following the Government's decision to abolish the suite of Best Value Performance Indicators.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the BVPIs outturn information was published on the Council's website on 30 June 2008. Both Cabinet and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee had been given a number of opportunities to comment on the shape of the Corporate Plan prior to final approval of the Plan at Council on 31 July 2008.

In response to a Member's request for clarification that the comments of scrutiny had been taken on board, the Assistant Chief Executive advised that a Members' seminar in relation to affordable housing had been arranged.

Decision

That the Corporate Plan 2008/09 be approved for consideration by Council on 31 July 2008.

64. Equality Standard Level 3 Validation and Challenging Council Services Project (*Chief Personnel Officer and Chief Financial Officer*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet's approval to vire funding from the Contingency provision to fund the costs of the Equality Standard Level 3 validation and the challenging Council services project.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Performance Portfolio Holder presented the report and referred to various reports had been submitted to the Performance Portfolio in respect of the Equality Standard Level 3 validation and the challenging Council services project, attached at Appendix A and B to the report. These reports had indicated that no specific funding had been included in the 2008/09 budget to fund these initiatives, the costs of which totalled £26,500, a breakdown of which was included in the report.

A total contingency provision of £0.699m had been included in the 2008/09 budget based on a robust assessment of the specific areas of risk as detailed in the report. A detailed review of these areas would be completed as part of the quarter 2 budget monitoring exercise. Although it was expected that in some areas the existing provision would not be adequate and a strategy would need to be developed to address this issue if there was an overall shortfall in the contingency provision. The Corporate Management Team recognised this risk and supported the proposal to reallocate £26,500 of the contingency provision to meet these costs.

Decision

That £26,500 of the contingency provision be reallocated to fund the Challenging Council Services project and the Equality Standard Level 3 validation.

65. Common Allocations Policy *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

Type of decision

Test ii applies

Purpose of report

To seek Members' approval for the proposed Tees Valley Common Housing Allocations Policy for the operation of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) this would operate across the five local authority areas and their partner landlords in the Tees Valley sub-region. The policy would also be used to assist with nominations to Registered Social Landlords within the Borough.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report outlined the aims and objectives of the Common Housing Allocations Policy, background information to the implementation of the Tees Valley Choice Based Lettings Scheme and review of the Council's existing Housing Allocations Policy. The draft Tees Valley Common Housing Allocations Policy, attached as an Appendix, had been developed

by the Tees Valley CBL Partnership. The partnership was made up of the five local authorities and their partner organisation that either own or manage housing stock on the authorities behalf, the membership details of which were included in the report.

The draft Tees Valley Housing Allocations Policy had been drawn up in accordance with Government guidance and to reflect the pattern of housing need in the Tees Valley area. The policy had five bands to assess the housing needs of applicants. All eligible applicants would have their housing needs assessed and would be placed into the relevant band, according to their level of housing need. The policy also identified applicants who had more than one type of housing need and they would be given higher priority within each band.

In order to support the long-term needs of communities and to deliver balanced and sustainable populations, properties would be advertised on a percentage basis to each band (ie quota's) to ensure that applicants within all bands had an opportunity to access accommodation. The main differences between the Joint Allocations Policy and the Common Allocations Policy was detailed in the report together with the results of consultation and governance and monitoring arrangements.

With regard to the timescale for implementation, all partners had reports to their various Cabinets and Boards recommending approval of the policy timetabled during June and July 2008. Following approval by all partners, there would be a 4 month period for configuration of the necessary ICT software. It was envisaged that the scheme would be operational from April 2009.

The location and services to be offered at the proposed Housing Option Centre was still subject to discussion and a further report would be brought forward to consider the proposals in detail. The premises currently being evaluated included the Windsor Offices, Bovis House, 39 Park Road and Park Tower.

In response to Members' concerns that the introduction of a Commons Allocations Policy would not reduce the housing waiting list, it was reported that Housing Hartlepool were in the process of undertaking an accommodation audit/evaluation and looking at incentive schemes to encourage people to move where appropriate into smaller properties to make better use of existing housing stock. A Member commented on the need to address the lack of good quality bungalows in the town.

Following discussion on the housing allocations policy and a Member's suggestion that Elected Members should be kept informed of any changes in the allocation and appeals process, the Director of Regeneration and Planning advised that Tees Valley Living Board was currently being reviewed and the Mayor was the Council's representative on this body. It was suggested that monitoring reports should be made to the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

Decision

- (i) That the draft Common Allocations Policy, attached at Appendix 1, be adopted from the implementation of Choice Based lettings.
- (ii) That work continues with Housing Hartlepool to develop appropriate joint local arrangements and refocusing of staff resources to ensure the smooth implementation of Choice Based Lettings and the establishment of a Housing Options Centre.

66. Annual Review of Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non key

Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet approval of the annual review of the Risk Management Strategy and the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR)

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Assistant Chief Executive provided background information on the Council's Risk Management Strategy and highlighted the changes proposed for this year as detailed in the report. The key change was that Cabinet was suggested as the recipient of the quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Register rather than the Performance Portfolio Holder. This was because strategic risks cut across departmental and portfolio responsibilities and could therefore benefit from consideration by Cabinet when steps to manage these risks were being considered.

The amendments had been agreed by the Corporate Risk Management Group and Corporate Management Team. The updated strategy was attached at Appendix 1. The outcome of the annual Strategic Risk Register Review was summarised by seven themes. The number of existing risks and proposed risks included climate change, strategic projects and partnership working. A summary of the updated Strategic Risk Register was attached at Appendix 2. In summary thirty risks were retained or slightly amended, twelve had been proposed for inclusion in departmental risk registers or deleted and the following four new risks proposed for inclusion:-

- The worsened economic outlook - This would impact on a wide range of outcomes sought by the Council including key projects and LAA targets.
- Tall Ships Project- This was already included in a departmental risk register but the recommendation was that it be moved to the strategic risk register.

- Business Transformation Project – A major project and key to achieving the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Terrorist threat – A key priority for Central Government with expectations that local authorities would play a role.

Seven risks were proposed for deletion, five were addressed by other strategic risks and two were deleted as they were considered less significant risks, details of which were included in the report.

Decision

That the Strategic Risk Register and the Risk Management Strategy, be approved.

A Member highlighted the excellent achievements of English Martyrs as national winners of the youth enterprise financial management in business award.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 am.

P DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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