

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

14 November 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),
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),
Robbie Payne (Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holder),
Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods & Communities Portfolio Holder),
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder),

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Officer
John Morton, Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Geoff Thompson, Head of Regeneration
John Potts, Principal Policy Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

135. Apologies for Absence

None.

136. Declarations of interest by members

None.

137. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2008

Confirmed.

138. Review of Schools Transformation Project Board (Director of Children's Services)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To invite Cabinet to review the Terms of Reference of the Schools Transformation Project Board.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder reported that the original Building Schools for the Future Project Board had been established by Cabinet in August 2006. The Remit and Terms of Reference of the Building Schools for the Future Project Board were reviewed in November 2007 when it became the Schools Transformation Project Board. As the Schools Transformation Programme entered a new phase a further review of the governance arrangements for the programme was timely.

In recent months the Schools Transformation Project Board had spent a considerable amount of time on both Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme. It had been difficult to conduct all the Board's business within the time allocated to meetings, mainly due to the volume of matters to be considered. There was a risk that, unless the work of the Board was re-focused, the Board would be unable to function effectively, due to the volume of issues to be considered.

As Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme move into very detailed operational phases, there was a need for Cabinet to re-consider the Terms of Reference of the Schools Transformation Project Board. Two potential options were submitted in detail in the report for cabinet's consideration:

1. Create separate Boards for Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme, with appropriate Terms of Reference and Membership
2. Retain a single Project Board with revised Terms of Reference.

The Portfolio Holder suggested that option 2 would provide the most appropriate way forward. A single board would require no additional support in terms of meeting administration and with a new focus on strategic matters, meetings could be more focussed. It was acknowledged that meetings in the past had lost some focus and had discussed levels of detail that may at times have been inappropriate.

Cabinet Members supported the proposal and indicated their support for the proposal to keep one board with revised terms of reference as long as the meetings would achieve their objectives while those involved were still receiving all the information they required to complete their role fully. There

was reference to the alternative methods that the detailed information would be disseminated and the Portfolio Holder clarified that this would be through briefings to governors and Members seminars on the transformation process.

The Mayor wished to acknowledge the work that the Board had undertaken on behalf of cabinet to this point in time. The considerations of the board and its subsequent recommendations had made Cabinet's job in managing the process significantly simpler than could have been the case. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the Mayor's comments and informed Cabinet that this was reflected by the fact that Hartlepool was one of only forty one authorities in the country that had had its Primary Capital Proposals approved unconditionally.

Decision

That the future governance of the Schools Transformation Programme be undertaken by a single Project Board with revised Terms of Reference as set out in option 2 in the report.

139. Groundwork in Hartlepool (*Director of Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek Council's approval for entering into a 'Partial Partnership' with Groundwork to be reviewed in 12 months and to consider the creation of a Groundwork in Hartlepool Delivery Board and to examine the potential to enter into a 'Full Partnership'.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that options for establishing a formal Groundwork in Hartlepool partnership model was not a new concept, it's potential having been considered only a couple of years ago in 2005/06. At that time it was decided not to proceed with the partnership model proposed. However, in the current dimate of reducing resources, increased demands on staff and budgets and the need to find new and alternative solutions to meeting customer needs, discussions have recommenced and potential ways forward had been re-examined. Groundwork had also been challenged by its partners, including the Department of Communities and Local Government, to extend coverage out of existing boundaries to offer environmental regeneration solutions across the region.

The Director commented that the proposal for Groundwork's introduction into Hartlepool would not now compete with the services provided by the Direct Services Organisation. Groundwork would now be bringing money into the town that would be spent with the Council and third sector providers to deliver its projects. Cabinet Members commented that what many elderly

residents in particular wanted was assistance with their gardens. The Director commented that that was a service the Council would not be able to secure funding for but through Groundwork, such funding may be available and this would be part of the negotiations with the organisation. A meeting had also taken place involving HVDA and OFCA to discuss the potential for Groundwork activity in Hartlepool which would add value to existing voluntary and community sector activity.

The Director indicated that any funding from the Council would be utilised as pump-priming to secure additional funds through Groundwork. Initially, a 'partial partnership' was proposed. Groundwork would develop its own projects with partners and work with the Council at a less strategic level. This model could attract significant resources but would be less well co-ordinated with Council priorities. To facilitate and monitor the development and implementation of the proposed pilot schemes and whilst a formal partnership arrangement was considered, an Officer Steering Group would be established to work with Groundwork staff. It was hoped that this officer steering group could eventually develop/expand into a Groundwork in Hartlepool (GiH) Delivery Board with responsibility for overseeing the development and delivery of a programme of activity for Groundwork in Hartlepool. In relation to the proposed board under such an arrangement, Members commented that increased elected member representation would be preferred and a further report on the board and its terms of reference was requested.

Decision

1. That the Council enter into a 'Partial Partnership' with Groundwork with a review of this position to be completed within twelve months to assess progress,
2. that a further report on the creation of a Groundwork in Hartlepool Delivery Board and examining further the potential to enter into a Full Partnership be submitted to Cabinet.

140. Stagecoach Services 1, 6, 7 and 7a – Supported Contracts and the Health Bus Service (*Director of Neighbourhood Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with an update on the recent decision to support the above services in respect of funding availability and contract periods.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder reported that in August 2008 a report was submitted to Cabinet detailing proposals from Stagecoach to withdraw elements of the 1, 6, 7 and 7A services from 23 August 2008, those being Sundays to Thursdays after 18:30hrs and, in the

case of Service 1 on every evening after 18:30hrs and all day on Sundays. Stagecoach had also expressed their concern at the ongoing decline in the adult fare-paying market which they say has struck at the heart of the viability of their present network.

At this meeting Members expressed their grave concerns at what they saw as manipulative practices by Stagecoach in withdrawing services as being unprofitable and looking to the Local Authority to pick up the base cost of the service through a contract. Members also noted that Stagecoach were reporting a downturn in patronage of 4% and requested that the Director of Neighbourhood Services should seek to “claw-back” an equivalent amount of the sum paid at the beginning of the financial year to fund supported services.

At the meeting it was indicated that the bulk of the supported services in the town were contracted until 31 March 2009, however these contracts actually run until August 2009. Members agreed that it was prudent to keep all of the supported contracts on the same timescale and hence agreed to support these additions until 31 March 2009. The costs provided by Stagecoach for these services as set out in the report, were for a period of one year, up until August 2009, hence bringing them in line with the rest of the supported bus contracts. It was also indicated that “claw-back” be sought for the concessionary fare payments made to Stagecoach for the reduction in the services and their own statement of a reduction in passenger figures.

The following quotations had been received from Stagecoach to retain the services on a supported basis up until 24 August 2009 -

Service 1	£42,971
Service 6	£20,148
Service 7/7A	£16,502

Payments are made to the Operators in 13 monthly instalments. This being the case, if the services were supported until March 2009, the total payment required would be £48,998, with a further £30,623 required if the services continued to August 2009.

The Mayor raised his concerns at subsidising Stagecoach further, a concern shared by other Cabinet Members. The Mayor also referred to the usage of the hospital service, which had increased to around 1200 passengers per month. There was concern that Stockton residents were benefitting from the return route to access services in Hartlepool hospital. The issue of whether a fare should be implemented for the return journey was questioned, unless Stockton Borough Council contributed to the costs.

Cabinet discussed their concerns at subsidising Stagecoach further against the need to maintain the services. Cabinet also raised again the issue of alternatives to the annual amount that the Council was paying to Stagecoach to subsidise and maintain services. Cabinet gave

consideration to whether to extend the subsidy for these services (1, 6, 7 and 7A) until the end of March 2009 or through to the end of the current contract in August 2009.

Decision

That Cabinet recommends that Council approve the supporting of services 1, 6, 7 and 7A (Sundays to Thursdays after 18:30hrs and, in the case of Service 1 on every evening after 18:30hrs and all day on Sundays) and the Health Bus until 31 March 2009 with the costs being met from the General Fund.

141. Request for Grant from Contingency Fund (*The Mayor*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request Cabinet to authorise the amount of £1000 pounds from the Cabinet contingency fund to help with the costs of travel for looked after young people and staff from the Young People's Team to attend an awards ceremony for which they have been shortlisted for two awards.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor reported that the Children and Young People's Service Awards 2008 was ran by the magazine Children and Young People Now. The Head of the Young People's Team nominated the young people for two awards for which they have been shortlisted: the Active Citizen Award and the Learning Award.

The event will take place in London on the evening of Thursday 20th November 2008 and it is proposed to take two members of the Children's Services Department who support both activities and three PAYP (Participation and Young People) staff who deliver the course together with 5 young people, 10 people in total. This will allow for one full table to be booked exclusively for Hartlepool Borough Council.

These young people from the YP Smiles Panel and two of these are also becoming young trainers for the next interview training. There is some cross over of young people who attend both. The cost of tickets for this black tie event is £104 per person and the total cost, including travel, is £2,200. A grant of £1000 was proposed, with the rest of the total cost (£2,200) will be made up from departmental budgets.

Decision

That approval be given to a grant £1000 from contingency funds towards the cost of the trip to the Children and Young People's Service Awards 2008.

142. Consultation Response – The Strategic Siting Process for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK - *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To consider and respond to the consultation document issued by the Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) on the Strategic Siting Criteria for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Head of Regeneration reported that in the White Paper on Nuclear Power (January 2008) the Government has set out its belief that it is in the public interest that new nuclear power stations should play a role in the UK's future energy mix alongside other low-carbon sources of electricity. Also set out in the White Paper on Nuclear Power were certain facilitative actions in relation to planning and siting, including running a Strategic Siting Assessment (SSA) process to develop criteria for determining the suitability of sites for new nuclear power stations and then assessing nominated sites against the criteria.

That is the main purpose of the current SSA consultation which, amongst other things, proposes certain criteria for assessing the suitability of sites, and provides for comment an overview of the SSA process. Alongside the SSA consultation, the Government has published a study of the environmental and sustainability effects of constructing new nuclear power stations on sites which have been identified through the application of the proposed SSA criteria, and asks whether there is agreement to the study findings. A copy of the full SSA consultation document has been placed for information in the Members Library. A summary of the consultation was set out in the report.

A draft response had also been prepared and was set out in the report. Due to the change in date of the cabinet meeting, and with the agreement of the Mayor, the draft response had been submitted to government due to the closing date for submissions being before the date of this meeting. Cabinet Members commented that they were concerned about the late submission of consultation documents to them and stated that in future proposed consultation responses should be submitted in a more timely fashion.

The Mayor and Cabinet members considered that the Council would need to be more proactive in the consultation process, possibly even commencing its own consultation with local stakeholders and the public. There were significant benefits to being identified as a site for a new nuclear

powers station in terms of the economic benefits to the locality through the jobs created during the construction period. Such views needed to be considered against the views of those opposing nuclear power to allow a balanced consultation exercise to be undertaken.

Decision

That the contents of the report, including the draft responses subsequently submitted to government, are approved as the Hartlepool response to the consultation document in relation to the Strategic Siting Criteria for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK.

143. Local Area Agreement (LAA) – Annual Review and Refresh 2008/09 (*Head of Community Strategy*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for Cabinet's information only.

Purpose of report

To outline the process and timetable for the LAA (Local Area Agreement) 2008/09 review and refresh.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Hartlepool's new LAA was agreed by Council in May and is a three year agreement (2008-11) based on the Community Strategy that sets out the priorities for Hartlepool. It formed an agreement between Central Government and a local area represented by Hartlepool Borough Council and other key partners through the Hartlepool Partnership. Local Authorities had a statutory duty to prepare a LAA in partnership with the Local Strategic Partnership. The report presented the progress made and the next stages in the process of the annual review and refresh.

The report identifies the indicators that Government Office North East (GONE) wished to look at as part of the review process. Cabinet Members questioned the indicators related to Proportion of Children in Poverty (N116), Working age people on out of work benefits (N152), and Working age population claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods (N153), where the Department of Work and Pensions had advised that Jobcentre Plus could not be the lead partner. It was understood that this was due the constitutional arrangements of Jobcentre Plus. This issue had been reported to the Hartlepool Partnership and local discussions were to be undertaken with stakeholders to determine who would be responsible for their delivery.

A Cabinet Member also referred to the regional arrangements that could assist in the delivery of the indicators relating to child poverty which the Council needed to follow through on.

Decision

That the report and the arrangements for the annual review and refresh

process and the progress made be noted.

144. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 145 Senior Management Review, (Para 2 – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

145. Senior Management Review (*Chief Personnel Officer*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the contents of reports prepared by external advisors following a review of job evaluation assessment and grading for senior management posts in the Council. To seek Cabinet's decision regarding the implementation of the advisors' recommendations.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Cabinet's consideration of this issue is set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

Cabinet's decision in relation to this issue is set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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