

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

24 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: Paul Walker, Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services
Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection
John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager
John Potts, Principal Policy Officer
Nigel Johnson, Housing Regeneration Coordinator
Colin Bolton, Building Consultancy Manager
Mark Barlow, Architect
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

146. Apologies for Absence

None.

147. Declarations of interest by members

None.

148. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2008

Confirmed.

149. Quarter 2 – Capital and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring Report 2008/09 *(Chief Financial Officer)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Council's overall Capital budget for 2008/2009 and the spending programmes where the Council acts as the Accountable Body for the period to 30th September, 2008. The report considered the Capital Monitoring and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder reported that in terms of the Capital Programme, £20.6m remained to be paid in the second half of the financial year, some 62% of the total programme, though this position was not unusual.

The Portfolio Holder sought a decision from Cabinet in relation to one item relating to Hartlepool Housing Regeneration. Officers had been informed that there was the possibility of additional funding but only to Council's who could demonstrate that they could accelerate on this multi-year scheme. The concern was that the council would need to commit extra money in the current year before receiving confirmation that we would receive it. It was therefore suggested that Council's approval be sought for a departure from the budget and policy framework, to increase spending on the project by £1.5m. This would be underwritten by temporary prudential borrowing. Even if the grant was not received, the temporary prudential borrowing may not be required as if the extra grant was not paid; the temporary prudential borrowing would be repaid from the 2009/10 grant allocation. This proposal would not impact on the revenue budget.

The Portfolio Holder reported that there were no other issues on the capital or revenue budgets, New Deal for Communities schemes and Single project schemes to bring to Cabinet's attention.

Decision

1. That Cabinet notes the contents of the report;
2. That Council's approval be sought for a departure from the Budget and Policy Framework to provide for £1.5m temporary Prudential Borrowing

to cover the costs of house purchases in advance of receiving grant funding.

150. Housing Market Renewal Funding Agreement with English Partnerships (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply.

Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet approval of to the funding agreement relating to resources granted by English Partnerships for the period 2008-12, towards the Central Hartlepool housing market renewal programme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor reported that in April 2008 Cabinet received a detailed report on the development and current position of Hartlepool's housing market renewal programme, and agreed the approach to spending the resources available over the next three to four years from the Department of Communities and Local Government via Housing Market Renewal Funding (HMRF) and the North East Housing Board through Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP). The agreed approach is to use these resources to progress acquisitions in the Perth Street area with the aim of securing in full the identified intervention site, with the remaining resources being prioritised towards the purchase of owner occupied properties within the Carr/Hopps St and Belle Vue sites.

Cabinet decided to prioritise site assembly in the Perth Street area following English Partnerships announcement of a specific allocation of additional funding towards this scheme. English Partnerships was a funding partner in the first phase of housing market renewal activity in the north central Hartlepool area (Moore Street/Chester Road/Chatham Road/Acclom Street) which is now being developed by Wimpey and following the success in assembling this site are keen to commit further investment to the North Central Hartlepool area.

The Mayor reported at the meeting that English Partnerships had allocated Hartlepool £4.85m this year as part of the overall allocation of £16.6m over three-years. This initial money was, however, ring-fenced to the Perth Street site and is subject to the Council agreeing to use other funding to secure the full acquisition of the identified site. The Mayor welcomed the funding allocation. The Mayor was keen that the council balanced its priorities against public expectations.

The Mayor highlighted that there were risks in relation to this allocation of funding. These were set out in detail in the report. The Mayor did state that there was agreement between the five Tees Valley authorities through the Tees Valley Living partnership to ensure that any allocations made across

the area were maximised through the virement of funding where necessary. This would allow councils to show that funding was being expended in accordance with the sub-regionally agreed funding programme and not jeopardise future year's allocations.

In response to Members questions about how many properties the funding would purchase, officers gave a potential number of properties based on valuations. However, around 80% percent of the properties in the area were owned by private landlords. It was suggested by a Member that the Council look at any potential to extend some of the property purchases and also extend the landlord licensing scheme into those areas. However the focus of the HMR Programme and the selective landlord licensing scheme had been noted.

Decision

That the Draft Heads of Terms and conditions specified in the English Partnership funding agreement (summarised in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report) be approved and that the Chief Solicitor be authorised to agree the final details of the agreement.

151. Tees Valley Bus Network Major Scheme Bid *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet as to the status of the Major Scheme Bid, and seek approval to the individual schemes proposed as part of the bid.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder reported that a joint bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) by all Tees Valley authorities, in conjunction with the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, for funding to improve the major bus corridors. The intention is to improve bus journey times and make public transport a more attractive option for local people. If the bid was successful it could see the Council receive £6-7 million funding. A decision is expected from DfT in December, to enable works to commence in the new financial year.

A total of 28 schemes for Hartlepool were included in the bid proposal, and details of each were outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. All schemes, whilst providing major improvements for public transport, would also give significant benefits to general traffic, in terms of reducing congestion. Some schemes at key junctions do not directly affect local residents or businesses, therefore no direct consultation would be required. General consultation would, however, take place through the local press, Hartbeat and the Council's website. Any schemes where residential or business properties were directly affected would also be subject to a full written

consultation exercise, in addition to the above. There would also need to be a 'buy-in' to the proposals from the local bus operators, through investment in new low floor vehicles for instance.

Decision

That approval be given to the twenty-eight individual schemes set out in the appendix to the report, subject to appropriate public consultation.

152. Quarter 2 – Corporate Plan and Revenue Financial Management Report 2008/09 *(Corporate Management Team)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the progress made towards achieving the Corporate Plan Actions in order to provide timely information and allow any necessary decisions to be taken; and to provide details of progress against the Council's overall revenue budget for 2008/2009.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Performance Portfolio Holder and the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder reported on the progress of the Corporate Plan Actions and the progress of the Council's overall revenue budget for 2008/2009.

In relation to the revenue budget, the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder highlighted three main issues. Departmental overspends were now forecast to reach £2.6m and departments were taking steps to pull back expenditure at an operational level to reduce this figure. Cabinet had previously agreed to consult on using investment income of £2m to offset income losses, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) coast and finally the Tall Ships event. Resources for the Tall Ships event would not increase the funding available, but will be earmarked as a contingency to protect the council's position from lower income due to bad weather or lower than anticipated sponsorship due to the recession. Finally, Cabinet needed to agree how to use the net increase in one-off resources of £2.3m. Previously cabinet had agreed to consult on proposals to allocate the money to support the budgets for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 which could be extremely challenging for the council.

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder expressed his concern in relation to the sponsorship income for the Tall Ships event. The Mayor indicated that there were officers pursuing sponsorship for the event. Reports were being fed into the Tall Ships Management Board and the Mayor indicated that he would forward these reports to the Cabinet Members. It was expected that the sponsorship monies would come in the year leading up to the event.

Decision

1. That the current position with regard to performance and revenue monitoring be noted;
2. That the proposed revised due dates for those actions in tables NC2, Pe2 and RL2 in the report be approved.

**153. Local Area Agreement (LAA) Quarter 2 (2008/09)
Summary of Performance Report** *(Principal Policy Officer,
Community Strategy)*

Type of decision

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

Purpose of report

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) included thirty-two priority outcomes, structured around the eight Community Strategy Themes. The report summarised the performance against all of the targets in the LAA and the designated Improvement Targets.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor reported that the new LAA had only been signed off in June and therefore this update was very early in the process. There were also quite a number of indicators missing from the report due to the fact that there was still quite an amount of detailed baseline information being gathered that would appear in the report over future quarters.

There were two specific indicators that were not expected to achieve target, these were: -

NI 92 Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest - the gap has narrowed from 45.7% (2007) to 44.0% and although this has not reached the target of 39.3% a significant reduction has still been achieved.

NI 72 Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy – this has increased from 38.4% (2007) to 40.4% and although this has not reached the target of 43.7%, it is still a significant increase.

The Director of Children's Services commented that the Foundation Stage targets were very challenging ones as they linked to a child's development within the home environment before coming into education. In common with the national picture, Sure Start programmes had not always been as successful in improving these outcomes as had been hoped. The intention was that new services delivered via children's centres would be more targeted and better focussed on outcomes. In addition, work was going on in schools to ensure results were properly moderated and accurately reflected children's achievement.

Cabinet Members questioned the smoking cessation target and how this would be monitored. It was indicated this would be monitored by the Primary Care Trust through attendances at NHS Smoking Cessation groups.

Members also commented on the involvement of young people in local democracy and congratulated all those involved in the recent 11 Million Take over Day events held at the Civic Centre and other locations and asked the Mayor if he intended to hold another Cabinet meeting in a local school as had happened during last year's local democracy week. It was indicated that there was a proposal to hold another cabinet meeting at a local school.

Decision

That the report as submitted be noted.

154. Quarterly Review of Strategic Risk Register *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the current position with regard to the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Performance Portfolio Holder reported on the amendments to existing strategic risks and any additional strategic risks following a review by Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). The review primarily involved examining risk ratings in terms of impact and likelihood and effectiveness of control measures in place to mitigate the risk.

The Mayor questioned what assessment had been made of the current financial situation and the potential effects on the Council. It was indicated that there had been consideration of this issue and the Chief Financial Officer had indicated that the appropriate place to manage such risks as within departments own risk registers and not the corporate register.

It was noted that there were two additional risks set out in the register – STR R043 - Fail to maximise benefits of implementing the Business Transformation Programme. This had been included as a local risk and more detailed assessment was required.

STR R044 - Failure to mitigate the effects of a malicious attack. This was a national risk set by central government.

Decision

That the review and amendments to the Council's strategic risk register and actions being taken be noted.

155. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

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 156 'Development of a Team around the Primary School Pilot Project and a Request for an Exception to the Contract Procedure Rules' (Para 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Minute 157 'Future Leisure Provision Facility Options for the Mill House Leisure Centre Site' (Para 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

156. Development of a Team around the Primary School Pilot Project and a Request for an Exception to the Contract Procedure Rules (*Director of Children's Services*)

Type of decision

Key decision – Test (i) applies.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the development of a "Team Around the Primary School" pilot project and to request a direction for an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the first year of the proposed project.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder reported that Hartlepool had been successful in attracting funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to pilot a project aimed at supporting families out of poverty. This funding will enable the development of a "Team Around the Primary School" project. The report set out the tight timescales involved with setting up the project and the funding arrangements for this year and the subsequent two years.

Decision

That a further report be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet setting out

the detailed commissioning arrangements required for the project and the process and timetable relating to the application for the funds.

157. Future Leisure Provision Facility Options for the Mill House Leisure Centre Site *(Director of Neighbourhood Services and Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

Type of decision

Non- key decision.

Purpose of report

To present a variety of options for the future development of the Mill House site, and in particular the replacement of the swimming pool.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder reported on the work undertaken since the Cabinet meeting of 15th September 2008 and outlined some of the options for redevelopment, taking into account the leisure requirements of the Council, together with other neighbours on the site.

Decision

Cabinet's decisions are set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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