

# PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

16th April 2009

The meeting commenced at 8.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Wally Stagg, Organisational Development Manager  
Lisa Anderson, Research Officer  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

## **64. Viewpoint – Citizen's Panel Results** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 27<sup>th</sup> phase of Viewpoint, Hartlepool Borough Council's citizen's panel, that was distributed in November 2008.

**Issue(s) 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 Viewpoint covers various topics and within this phase there were questions on:-

- Operation Cleansweep

- Contacting the Council
- Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles
- Consulting with the Public

The results had been reported back to the relevant departments within the council and back to Viewpoint members via the regular Viewpoint newsletter. A copy of the overall report had also been placed in the members' library, in all public libraries across the Borough for public access as well as the Council's website.

The key findings were as follows:

- Operation Cleansweep – eight out of ten Viewpoint members thought it was a good idea but only one in ten remembered it visiting their local area.
- Contacting the Council – Viewpoint members were most likely to contact the Council to complain about a problem in their local area or about the Council not doing something they should have done. The majority were satisfied with the service they received last time they contacted the Council
- Taxis and private hire vehicles – Viewpoint members were supportive of a five star rating system for taxis and private hire vehicles.
- Consulting with the Public – Viewpoint members felt more positive about the way the Council consults with local people, taking their views and opinions on board when making decisions, compared to results obtained in 2007.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the newsletter appended to the report, requesting that this be limited to feedback of previous Viewpoint findings and that any political comments be removed. She also asked if Councillors were able to complete the surveys as she had recently received a copy. The Research Officer advised that this should not have happened and she would ensure that the Portfolio Holder's details were removed from the mailing lists. The Assistant Chief Executive commended the Research Officer on her work in ensuring any necessary actions arising from the results were carried out as effectively as possible.

### **Decision**

That the results of the survey be noted.

## **65. Single Status Agreement Appeals** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To provide an update on progress on appeals received.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Single Status Appeals Procedure was agreed by the Portfolio Holder in June 2008. As part of the procedure officers would bring monthly updates of appeals received and progress in dealing with them. Details were given of the number of appeals submitted by individual departments, broken down into headings including intention to appeal submitted but appeal not submitted yet, appeals received/priority and grade changed as a result of alternative arrangements. Details were also given of the prioritisation of submitted appeals.

The Portfolio Holder referred to recent comments made by her Cabinet colleagues regarding the slow progress of the appeals process however she was of the opinion that it was important to follow the prescribed process correctly. The monthly updates gave her the opportunity to address any issues and she felt it might be useful to update Cabinet colleagues in a similar way on a quarterly basis also.

**Decision**

To note progress on appeals received.

**66. Feedback from Workforce Improvement Challenge Peer Review** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the report received from the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) following the Workforce Improvement Challenge Peer Review which took place in March 2009.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Workforce Improvement Challenge is a newly developed peer review that supports an authority to review, evaluate and assess how it recruits, develops and deploys its workforce to meet its business and service priorities. As part of the process a three-day on-site assessment took place for 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March 2009. During this the peer team interviewed a number of staff and several elected members. The feedback was delivered on the final day. All the areas

for improvement were areas which had already identified internally however the team found more strengths than had previously been identified. A summary of the findings was given within the report with more detailed information appended for the Portfolio Holder's attention. The Peer team had particularly commented upon the strength of the self assessment document which the IDeA were now considering using as an example of best practice.

A number of short-term actions were detailed in response to the feedback including improvements in corporate communications, a more strategic approach to leadership development and innovations in member development. More long-term actions were expected to be identified by utilising the report from the 2008 corporate Investors in People assessment and the results of the 2009 employee survey.

The Assistant Chief Executive commented that while the feedback had been generally positive the lack of member engagement in member development had been highlighted. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the many and varied efforts that had been made by officers to encourage members to attend however there had been no demonstrable outcome. The Organisational Development Manager advised that the elected member on the Peer review Team had made a number of suggestions including a requirement in the constitution that members must receive specific training as a condition of membership for specific committees or forums. The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted that this was being investigated for meetings such as Planning Committee. The Portfolio Holder further suggested that member training be scheduled for before, during and after existing meetings however the Assistant Chief Executive advised that this had been attempted before and had not been particularly successful. The Portfolio Holder felt that Mayor's briefing meetings could be an appropriate forum.

The Portfolio Holder also referred to the training and development plan she had previously undertaken and asked for further information on the outcome of this. She also asked that the issues raised in relation to member development be taken to the Local Joint Consultative Committee for further consideration.

### **Decision**

That the feedback report and the planned actions in response to it be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 am.

**PETER DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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