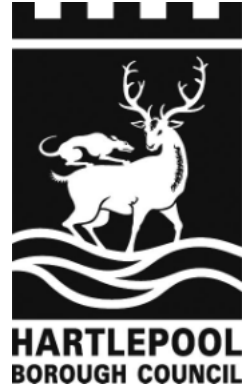


CABINET AGENDA



Monday, 29th June 2009

at 9.00 am

in Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CABINET:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Hall, Hargreaves, Hill, Jackson, Payne, and Tumilty

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

3. **MINUTES**

To receive the Record of Decision in respect of the meeting held on 18 May 2009
(previously circulated)

4. **BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

No items

5. **KEY DECISIONS**

No items

6. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

6.1 North Hartlepool SRB Projects – *Director of Neighbourhood Services*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

No items

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No items

9. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items

EXEMPT ITEMS

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 referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10. EXEMPT ITEM REQUIRING DECISION

10.1 Contest/Prevent – Counter Terrorism – *Director of Neighbourhood Services* (para 3)

10.2 Senior Management Structure – Tier 2 – *Chief Executive* (para 2)

CABINET REPORT
29th June 2009



Report of: Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: NORTH HARTLEPOOL SRB PROJECTS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Cabinet's views on the future maintenance of SRB sponsored projects.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Current condition of SRB funded projects at the Headland.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

The principle of maintaining SRB funded projects covers more than one Portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Cabinet

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That Cabinet determine which course of action they would wish officers to pursue.

Report of: Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: NORTH HARTLEPOOL SRB PROJECTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Cabinet's views on the future maintenance of SRB sponsored projects.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members are aware SRB Projects throughout the town, but particularly those in the north, were almost entirely funded through SRB monies. However, in very few, if any of these projects was there any revenue funding put in place to ensure their future maintenance.

2.2 Members of the SRB Board and officers were aware of this at the time that projects were suggested, costed and carried out but the single regeneration funding was only designed for the initial project work and commuted sums were not allowed. In other projects the Council has, over the past few years, insisted on commuted sums in order that ongoing revenue at least for up to 5 years after the scheme is completed is made available.

2.3 There have been several schemes which the north Hartlepool partnership sponsored which have caused maintenance problems. I am sure that all Members are aware of the ongoing difficulties of the Headland padding pool and the sunken lights along the promenade and these are only two examples, there are many others.

2.4 St Hilda's Ward Councillors have raised, on many occasions, these issues and I believe we are now at the point where the Cabinet needs to make a decision as to how we fund future maintenance of these schemes as there is no funding within current budgets.

2.5 There are at present two schemes which are causing us major difficulty and one Councillor has insisted that some work is carried out which is why the report has been brought to Cabinet.

Celtic Cross

2.6 Members may be aware that recently the Celtic Cross located just outside St Hilda's Church has been vandalised and virtually destroyed. Attached to this report at **Appendix 1** are photographs showing the location of the cross which as Members will see was on a corner plot

and prone to vandalism, together with a photo showing suggested location.

- 2.7 Initially the erection and purchase of the Celtic Cross was funded through SRB at a cost £2500 in 2007. Planning permission was approved for a sand stone Celtic Cross to be located adjacent to St Hilda's Church Grounds. The cross was erected in 2008 and within 24 hours had been vandalised. SRB funded the repairs at that time but in April of this year the cross was once again vandalised but this time beyond repair.
- 2.8 The cost for replacement of the cross is £1600 in york stone the same as the original. However, there will be an additional cost for relocating with a concrete base of approximately £400. The relocation would be essential in order to endeavour to prevent any further vandal related problems nevertheless this cannot be guaranteed. The existing location is very close to the footpath which may have contributed to the level of targeted vandalism over the past year, the proposed site is set back and situated within a flower bed just below the original Celtic Cross foundations which still remain today.
- 2.9 The cross is a complimentary feature of the headland's heritage and clearly adds to the story trail and other tourist attractions on the headland.

Durham Street Cobble Stones

- 2.10 In respect of the cobble stones in Durham Street then there are two problems to resolve. Firstly the nature of the construction which is one of small tiles grouted in to position with sand / cement and this is a high maintenance solution in footways. The grouted areas are disintegrating and the tiles are loosening in a lot of areas. Consequently, in the absence of a reconstruction scheme to relay we are unable to prevent repeat visits. As I understand it, our requirement to frequently revisit this area is one of the Councillor's complaints. Having said that, when we visit, and the tile(s) is/are there, we regROUT them into position.
- 2.11 The second problem is that the tiles sometimes go missing. The existing material is Indian Sandstone. To date we have not been able to find a supplier with any stock of replacement tiles. We are trying to find a "similar" alternative, but as it is a natural material, getting a match has so far proved to be impossible. In the mean time we have been "forming" replacement tiles with small blobs of insitu concrete, trowelled to mimic the pattern of the surrounding area. The nature of this repair is, as I understand it, the second complaint.
- 2.12. I accept wholeheartedly that forming replacements from insitu concrete can only be considered to be a temporary repair. However our ability to deliver a permanent repair is dependant upon sourcing the appropriate materials. Consequently, in the short term, we must continue to maintain

using our current method. Unless and until we can source and appropriate replacement, it is difficult to do anything else. If we can source a replacement material, we can estimate costs. It is likely to be a one off cost to purchase a minimum order of stock plus a square metre rate for laying them.

- 2.13 In the longer term it may be more cost effective to replace the material. I would note that we changed the first three rows of blocks used on the Town Wall scheme from grouted natural black stone cobbles to butt jointed concrete blocks. To the best of my knowledge there have been no further defects in that area since the change of materials. Perhaps in the long term, a change in materials in Durham Street would be appropriate. We have checked the remaining blocks and feel that they are likely to go the same way over the next 5 years or so, but that is a decision for further down the line and one that may involve some consultation. The grouting to the remaining areas of the Town Wall blocks is also deteriorating in a similar manner.
- 2.14 Finally, I think that it is important to achieve a sense of proportionality on this subject. By comparison, for instance to the York Road footways, this issue is relatively minor.
- 2.15 I have brought this issue albeit relatively minor to Members attention because Officers need to be given some direction when they are constantly berated about major repairs for which there are no funding options. The Council can continue as we are at present by trying to affect repairs as and when they are needed but they will never be to the standard of the original scheme due to the reasons set out above.
- 2.16 The Council could allocate funding for such repairs but this was put forward as a budget pressure last year and was rejected because of more pressing needs.
- 2.17 Finally the relevant Portfolio Holder could look at each project on a scheme by scheme basis and make a determination at that time.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Whilst the current repairs to the cobble stones in Durham Street can continue on an adhoc basis and not greatly affect the budget any scheme to replace would be a major cost and estimates are being prepared at present and hopefully will be available for the meeting.
- 3.2 The Celtic Cross replacement costs are £2,000 but this would be subject to Members and planning agreeing to a relocation and the Cross not being replaced in sandstone but in another material.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Cabinet determine which course of action they would wish officers to pursue.

5. CONTACT OFFICER

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