

# **CABINET**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

13 July 2009

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pamela Hargreaves (Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder)  
Gerard Hall (Adult Services Portfolio Holder)  
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)  
Robbie Payne (Finance & Performance Portfolio Holder)  
Peter Jackson (Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder)  
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Trevor Rogan, Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum  
Councillor Chris Simmons, Chair of Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum

### **Officers:**

Paul Walker (Chief Executive)  
Andrew Atkin (Assistant Chief Executive)  
Peter Devlin (Chief Solicitor)  
Mike Ward (Chief Financial Officer)  
Joanne Machers (Chief Personnel Officer)  
Peter Scott (Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)  
Nicola Bailey (Director of Adult and Community Services)  
Adrienne Simcock (Director of Children's Services)  
Dave Stubbs (Director of Neighbourhood Services)  
Joanne Smithson (Head of Community Strategy)  
Anthony Steinberg (Head of Economic Development)  
Tom Britcliffe (Principal Planning Officer)  
Nigel Johnson (Housing Regeneration Co-ordinator)  
Patrick Wilson (Employment Development Officer)  
James Walsh (Scrutiny Support Officer)  
Steve Hilton (Public Relations Officer)  
Angela Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

## **8. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **9. Declarations of interest by Members**

None were declared at this point in the meeting.

## **10. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2009**

Received.

## **11. Final Report – Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People** *(Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To outline the findings and conclusions of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Chair of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum presented the final report of the forum's investigation into the 'Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People' outlining the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, its terms of reference, the methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations. The final report was approved by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 24 April 2009. The report was commended to Cabinet.

As part of the investigation the Portfolio Holders for Adult and Public Health Services and Culture, Leisure and Tourism had been invited to attend the Scrutiny Forum to provide comments and they welcomed this report and its findings. However, it was acknowledged that additional resources were needed to improve these kind of facilities further and Members were particularly interested in the recommendation referring to partnership working with a view to raising the necessary resources. The report also highlighted the need to increase public awareness and the marketing of the facilities available in the town and it was suggested that this could be looked at in conjunction with the report from the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum later on the agenda, which examined the marketing of Hartlepool. It was also suggested that a recent report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum which examined the recreation facilities available for young people be examined alongside this report.

## Decision

That the recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the 'Access to Recreation Facilities for Older/Vulnerable People', as set out below, be approved and adopted;

- (a) That the Council continues to improve the way in which it raises public awareness of the available recreational activities through the increased promotion of activities on the Council's website and in 'Hartbeat', with emphasis on the provision of information in an easily accessible way;
- (b) That in continuing to improve the way in which available recreational activities are publicised, the Council ensures that arrangements are formalised for increased promotion of activities in the local press and radio (including Radio Hartlepool);
- (c) That the Council develops easy to read notices detailing forthcoming recreational activities to display in all leisure facilities, community and voluntary group buildings, libraries, doctors surgeries and schools;
- (d) That the Council produce an easy to read information booklet detailing all the leisure facilities and activities available and it be displayed in all leisure facilities, community and voluntary group buildings, libraries, schools and on the Council's website;
- (e) That the Council continues to work in partnership with key organisations to develop new recreational activities / initiatives which will improve the health and well being of the people in Hartlepool;
- (f) That the Council supports the interim improvement measures and future investment in the town's leisure facilities to maintain and improve access, participation and satisfaction levels; and
- (g) That the Council considers the value of partnership working in any future plans for the building of a new leisure facility within Hartlepool.

## 12. **Action Plan – Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

### Type of decision

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To agree an action plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People'.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's report was welcomed along with the proposed Action Plan (set out at Appendix A to the report) in response to the forum's recommendations following the investigation into the 'Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People'.

### **Decision**

That the Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the 'Access to Recreation Facilities for Vulnerable/Older People' be approved.

## **13. Final Report – The Marketing of Hartlepool** *(Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To outline the findings and conclusions of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'The Marketing of Hartlepool'.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum presented the final report of the forum's investigation into the 'Marketing of Hartlepool' outlining the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, its terms of reference, the methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations. The final report was approved by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 24 April 2009. The report was commended to Cabinet.

It was noted that given the limited resources and budget available, the Economic Development Team perform remarkably well and it was suggested that marketing should be considered carefully during the budget

consultation process for 2010/11 as this was regularly an area identified for budget savings.

### **Decision**

That the recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the 'Marketing of Hartlepool', as set out below, be approved and adopted;

- (a) That the residents and businesses of Hartlepool be encouraged to celebrate the visitor and business attractions that Hartlepool has to offer;
- (b) That the Destination Hartlepool website should feature video footage of the visitors attractions in Hartlepool;
- (c) That residents within Tees Valley be encouraged to visit Hartlepool and that tourism officers from the region are given a guided tour of the attractions that Hartlepool has to offer;
- (d) That the signage into and around Hartlepool be:-
  - (i) Reviewed, with particular reference to interpretation signage; and
  - (ii) Re-examined in relation to the use of an intermediary company who charges the Council for signage on roundabouts in Hartlepool with consideration about bringing 'in-house'.
- (e) That there be continued encouragement and incentives for new businesses to settle in the Town on existing sites and where these sites no longer meet the incoming needs, new business sites be developed.

## **14. Action Plan – Scrutiny Investigation into The Marketing of Hartlepool** (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'The Marketing of Hartlepool'.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's report was welcomed along with the proposed Action Plan (set out at Appendix A to the report) in response to the forum's recommendations following the investigation into the 'Marketing of Hartlepool'.

### **Decision**

That the Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the 'Marketing of Hartlepool' be approved.

## **15. Strategy for Funding One Off Business Transformation Costs** *(Chief Financial Officer)*

### **Type of decision**

Key decision – test (i) applies.

### **Purpose of report**

To consider funding proposals for the one-off costs for Business Transformation.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

As part of the detailed budget recommendations approved by Cabinet and Council in February, Members approved the principle of funding one-off Business Transformation severance costs (£3.14m) and one-off implementation costs (£0.68m) on a loan basis repayable over a five year period from the gross savings achieved from implementing the Business Transformation Programme (BTP).

The report referred to available resources of £2.8m which had arisen from the following issues:

- Lower 2008/09 Departmental Overspend
- Underspend on Area Based Grant
- Job Evaluation – pre 2009/10 costs
- Job Evaluation – temporary saving 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Uncommitted Severance Funding

The Chief Financial Officer highlighted the risks associated with this

strategy which were outlined in the report.

### **Decision**

The following strategy, in priority order, for funding the one-off BTP implementation costs and the Departmental Restructure and Management Structures and Service Delivery work-streams up front costs was approved:

- (i) Use available departmental underspends and reserves (where these exist) to maximise ongoing savings;
- (ii) Use £2.5m of the resources identified in paragraph 2.2 of the report to fund these costs.
- (iii) Use loan funding repayable from the gross BTP efficiencies for any residual costs, including service delivery costs not funded from (i) and (ii) up to a maximum of £3.7m.

## **16. Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents: Draft Submission Documents** (Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)

### **Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to publish and subsequently submit to Government, the Development Plan Documents which will guide future minerals and waste development in Hartlepool.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor presented a report which highlighted that the Submission Documents represented the final stage of preparation of the Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The DPDs will provide a strategy and consequent policies for managing minerals and waste development across the Tees Valley boroughs. The DPDs when adopted will form part of the Council's statutory Local Development Framework (LDF) and will cover the period 2010-2025. Two DPDs were being prepared; a **Core Strategy DPD** which set out the Strategic objectives and overarching policies and a **Policies and Sites DPD** which contained more detailed policies and identified sites for development.

The report explained how the DPDs were being prepared jointly by the five Tees Valley boroughs and that progress was dependent on all five councils

being satisfied with the content of the final drafts. The submission documents follow on from Preferred Options which were endorsed by all five councils January 2008. Subject to the council approval of the submission Documents, it was anticipated that publication of the DPDs will take place in August 2009 and, barring substantive changes being necessary following publication, that submission to the Government will be in November 2009.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the publication of the Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Policies and Sites Development Plan Documents in so far as they relate to the Borough of Hartlepool were endorsed and were referred to Council for approval.
- (ii) That subject to no substantive changes to the documents being necessary following publication, the subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government was approved.
- (iii) Authority was given to the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning Policy, to make any necessary minor amendments to the documents prior to publication and submission.

## **17. Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

### **Type of decision**

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

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Cabinet on the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements projects and the outcome of the Major Bus Scheme Bid to fund a comprehensive package of bus infrastructure and service improvements across the Tees Valley.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods presented the report which set out the current schemes within the Borough that were part of the project and included a description of the next steps within the project's development and the suggested governance arrangements for these next steps. The financial implications for the Borough in terms of the likely funding to be received towards the improvements and the expected 'local' contribution required to secure this funding from the Department of



Transport. It also identified the key risks to the Council in securing funding.

A Member questioned what involvement the bus companies had in relation to the implementation of the network improvements. The Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that the bus companies were full partners in this bid and were contributing in relation to type of buses, timetabling, real timetabling and new bus shelters and it was proving to be a positive partnership. There was some concern about the build up of traffic in some areas and whether this was likely to impact on fringe areas of the town centre, ie Murray Street. The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods commented that a 10 minute service for all buses would be rolled out in August which should alleviate some of these problems and all Members would be invited to a presentation detailing the plans for this.

### **Decision**

- (i) That Officers were authorised to develop the schemes within the early part of the revised infrastructure schedule to obtain supplier prices.
- (ii) That Officers were authorised to proceed to obtain the necessary traffic orders to implement the measures planned within the first year of the project.
- (iii) That Officers were authorised to work with the Joint Strategy Unit and bus operators to confirm the anticipated benefits for the corridors within the bid.
- (iv) The Council's commitment to provide its calculated share of the 'local' contribution to the overall project was confirmed.
- (v) The submission of an updated business case in order to gain a Full Approval for the project in Autumn 2009 was agreed.

## **18. Local Authority Bid for Social Housing Grant for the Development of Affordable Housing** *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Key decision – test (i) and (ii) apply.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an overview of the scheme recently announced by the Government allowing local authorities to bid for Social Housing Grant for the development of social housing. The report set out the proposals for the possible implementation of such a scheme within Hartlepool.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor presented the report which gave an overview of the Governments' scheme to allow Local Authorities to bid for Social Housing Grant (SHG) for new build affordable housing units. This represented a significant opportunity to maintain the momentum for bringing forward affordable homes within the town and the report therefore provided details of the bid criteria and presented proposals for a potential scheme and SHG bid within Hartlepool. The details of this proposal were set out within the report and timescales associated with delivery were presented. Given the limited number of resources available from the HCA under the National Affordable Homes Programme over the next 21 months this scheme was considered to be one of the few opportunities to attract grant by an alternative route for affordable housing provision in Hartlepool and the report recommended developing a Hartlepool scheme for consideration during the first bidding round.

Members were asked to note that there were two potential schemes that matched the criteria and were felt were in a position to secure this funding for the Charles Street and Golden Flatts areas of the town. It was noted that the timescale for bids to be submitted for this funding was so tight that many other local authorities may not be in a position to develop a scheme in time. It was therefore suggested that a reserve scheme should be developed should additional funding become available. In response to a Member's question it was noted that this funding was ring-fenced to local authorities and therefore Housing Hartlepool could not apply in their own right.

Members agreed this was an excellent opportunity to secure additional high quality social housing for the town and it was noted that the proposed developments would meet Level 4 of the energy efficiency standards. A Member suggested that consideration should be given to offering some of the proposed social housing to the communities in the local areas of the developments in the first instance. The Housing Regeneration Co-ordinator indicated that this will be considered through the local lettings process.

The Chief Executive commented that there were a lot of housing initiatives around but that this was unusual given that it was specific for local authorities and added that Officers had done a great job putting this bid together in such a tight timescale as it was incredibly complicated

## **Decision**

- i.) The contents of the report were noted.
- ii) The proposal to pursue an application for Local Authority Social Housing Grant by the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009 deadline was approved.
- iii) Option 3 for the delivery of two schemes, subject to confirmation of viability was approved.
- iv) The method of procurement including progression of discussions with Housing Hartlepool as the preferred developing agent was agreed.
- v) That authority was delegated to the Community Safety and Housing

Portfolio holder to approve changes to the application or any other actions that may be required before bid submission.

- vi) That the proposal to fund 50% of the capital costs of this scheme between £1,278,700m and £2,317,860m from Prudential Borrowing (the amount is dependant on the outcome of the bid and the number of units successfully awarded LA-SHG), subject to the resulting annual repayment costs being fully funded from rental income and to seek Council approval to amend the 2009/10 capital programme and Prudential Borrowing limits accordingly was approved.
- vii) That the Council would have to fund the short-term cash flow costs of this development until properties were let and the proposals that these costs were either funded from additional investment income if this exceeds the approved budget, or if this was not possible, from the 2010/11 headroom included in the budget forecasts was approved.
- viii) The submission of planning application or applications for any other statutory consents that may be required direct by the Council or the developer agent was approved.
- ix) That an additional reserve scheme be developed to a point to enable submission for an additional funding bid should this become available.

## **19. Business Transformation – Quarterly Programme Update** (*Chief Executive*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide a recap on the programme, to update on progress on the Programme since April 2009 and to provide an outline of forthcoming activity.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The report provided an overview of the current status of the programme and forthcoming reports which will be considered by Cabinet. In providing this review and forward plan it was the intention of the report to provide sufficient information for the overall monitoring of progress of the Programme against the originally established timescales.

In addition the report included an update in respect of both financial and risk related issues. Although the financial information was, at this stage, limited due to the previously discussed intended savings profiles it was the intention that these monitoring reports provided up to date information in relation to both savings achieved and the costs incurred for future meetings.

This report also encompassed decisions required from Cabinet in respect of the make up of the Programme Board and the department names for the new structure.

It was noted that the Programme Board had suggested extending the Board to include a member from each of the Scrutiny Forums, but the Board already included the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. It was also noted that some Members had difficulty attending Board meetings and a suggestion to reconsider the timing of meetings was put forward.

Due to the recent changes in portfolio holder responsibilities, it was considered that an additional Cabinet Member be appointed to the Board. A discussion ensued on the suggested names of the new Departments as contained in the report.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the progress made to date on the implementation of the programme and forthcoming reports to Cabinet included in this report were noted.
- (ii) That the Programme Board be amended in light of recent portfolio changes to delete the Performance Portfolio and to include an additional Cabinet Member to be determined at a later date.
- (iii) That consideration be given to changing the times of the Business Transformation Board meetings to maximise Member attendance.
- (iv) That the names of the two new departments be agreed as:
  - Child and Adult Services
  - Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

## **20. Business Transformation – Service Delivery Options** (Assistant Chief Executive)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To report on the Service Delivery Option (SDO) prioritisation programme, to set out a SDO framework to be followed as part of each SDO review and to comment on the resourcing of the SDO programme in order to achieve the savings identified.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

This report focused on the SDO element of the business transformation programme which was about ensuring we achieve the best use of resources, it was not about providing poor quality services or outsourcing.

The SDO prioritisation programme, attached at Appendix 1, included the full range of services provided by the authority including both front line and back office services. Services had been grouped, based largely upon the proposed new structures, to determine an achievable prioritisation programme that can be delivered over the next 3 - 4 years, commencing 2009/10.

Indicative differential efficiency targets for each review were currently being calculated based upon 08/09 revenue budgets, external funding and grants.

### **Decision**

The prioritisation programme attached as Appendix 1 was approved.

## **21. Business Transformation – Asset Management** (Assistant Chief Executive)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To report on the Asset Management Rationalisation Programme of Council administration buildings and the reduction in surplus property and land.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The report concentrated on the rationalisation of council property and land, Cabinet agreed to the implementation of the asset management business case in January 2009. Property rationalisation will result in a reduction in the number of land/buildings in the property portfolio leading to more efficient service delivery and a reduction in property revenue costs and maintenance requirements.

The Asset Management Business case proposed that all land and property held be reviewed and challenged and the surplus reduced. Whilst there was still a great deal of work to be done in respect of non administration

operational buildings it was now possible to present a schedule of proposals, see Appendix 1. This will facilitate a start on active disposals being made, taking into account marketability of any land or property and market conditions.

The vision for the administration buildings portfolio was that there will be a reduction as a result of the business transformation programme. This will be facilitated by the disposal of buildings which cannot be readily adapted or refurbished cost effectively and termination of unsuitable leasing arrangements in order to good quality multi-purpose facilities.

In response to the suggestion from the Performance Board in respect of decision making on land and property disposals, the Mayor indicated that delegated authority in relation to the disposal of land and buildings would continue through the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance.

The Chief Executive confirmed that once an approved list of buildings to be considered for disposal was agreed, the current occupiers of those buildings would be kept informed of progress.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the schedule attached at Appendix 1 be approved as the basis for taking the programme forward at this time.
- (ii) That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance continue with delegated authority for decisions in relation to the disposal of land and buildings.

## **22. Business Transformation – Customer Service** *(Chief Executive)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To update Cabinet on the progress made since the last report on 26 January 2009 and to provide an outline of the Customer Service Business Case of the Business Transformation Programme for decision.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

Cabinet had received a number of reports on the Business Transformation programme. These reports determined the need for the programme, the rationale underpinning it and intended outcomes, the programme structure

and the component parts of the programme. Cabinet also agreed (at the meeting of the 26 January) to receive this separate report on the Customer Services Business Case.

The Business Transformation programme was underpinned with a rationale for efficiencies and also identified that Hartlepool Borough Council was aiming to be an organisation which can:

- Maintain and continue to improve service performance;
- Make more efficient and effective use of its resources, people, buildings etc;
- Deliver services in a responsive manner;
- Maximise the extent to which services are delivered directly to the user; and
- Minimise the number of “transactions” or hand offs to achieve this.

The implementation of the Customer Service Business Case was key to achieving these aims. The Customer Service Business Case aimed to transform customer service delivery and the way customers interact with the Council through the delivery of four key elements:-

**Reduce Avoidable Contact** - National Indicator 14 reducing avoidable contact (NI14), was about minimising the proportion of customer contact that was of low or no value to the customer. Measuring avoidable contact was not about avoiding contact with our customers, but about reducing the need for customers to contact us because we have failed to deliver a service or information. NI 14 was introduced to enable local authorities to develop a deeper understanding of service delivery from the viewpoint of the customer. Capturing data for NI14 enabled the Council to gain a clearer insight into the ways in which customers contact us and this information was being used to identify and make lasting service improvements to reduce avoidable contact.

**Shifting Contact to more efficient channels** - We want to offer customers an improved choice of how they contact the Council appropriate to the service they want to access, for example, paying for a service on-line in the comfort of your own home may be more convenient for some people as opposed to travelling to the Civic Centre to pay for a service. Savings can be made by encouraging customers to use more efficient channels when contacting the Council. Moving contact from face to face and white mail to self service via the web reduces the costs of delivering services.

**Consolidate contact to the Contact Centre** - Hartlepool Connect places the customer at the heart of its service delivery and shows commitment to ensuring the customer experience was first class and believed that expanding its service delivery across other areas of the Council will be beneficial for both the authority and the customer. Hartlepool Connect's 3 year Roll in Programme aimed to extend the level of service provision and provide added value to services already transferred into Hartlepool Connect, transfer in new high volume services. Part of this programme will

include identifying where customer contact points can be rationalised this will link with the overall asset management plan to ensure services were delivered through the most efficient and appropriate mix of channels.

**Develop a Customer Service and Channel Strategy** - The development of a Customer Channel and Access Strategy will support the customer service business case. In developing the Strategy, the Council will re-examine its existing 'customer' related strategies including the access, communication, complaints, comments and compliments and consultation strategies, these strategies will define how customers will interact with the Council in the future and ensure that the transformation will be sustained, continuously reviewed and improved. An outcome of the Customer Channel and Access Strategy will be to develop a programme of work around customer insight which will be used to inform future developments in customer service. In order to truly deliver services that meet customer needs and expectations the Council need a better understanding of its customers and how they see services being delivered, how they want to access services and interact with the Council in the future.

Although this element of the Transformation Programme was described as "cost neutral" there will be investment required in order to achieve savings. The costs of this should be balanced off by making savings in both overheads and staffing costs.

Members were generally fully supportive of increased web access and it was suggested that additional computer terminals be placed in libraries with library staff trained to help as it was felt that this would increase the use of web access to Council services. A discussion ensued about the benefits service and the transfer of this to the Contact Centre. It was noted that this service had been awarded national accolades and Members were concerned that this excellent level of service may be affected by the transfer. In view of Members' concerns and bearing in mind the tight timetable encompassing the Business Transformation Programme, it was suggested that the recommendations be approved, subject to further detailed discussion about the transfer of the benefits service to the Contact Centre at a future briefing.

## **Decision**

That subject to further discussions in relation to the Benefits Service transferring to the Contact Centre, the following was approved:

- (i) A prioritised plan to deliver the improvements required to meet the targets to reduce avoidable contact over the next 3 years be developed.
- (ii) A targeted service based programme to move contact more towards self service through the website, payments system, booking system and e-forms projects be developed.
- (iii) A prioritised Roll in Programme to migrate services in Hartlepool



- Connect be developed.
- (iv) That both Contact Centre team leader posts continue on a temporary basis, funded from efficiency savings, subject to review in 12 months time.

## **23. Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development declared a personal interest in the following item.

## **24. Future Jobs Fund** (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) application submitted by the Economic Development Team on behalf of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) and its partners on 30 June 2009.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

This report documented the FJF application and provided an overview of the proposed activities that will be undertaken by HBC and its partners if funding was secured.

A discussion ensued on the benefits of the scheme and Members were keen to ensure that support was in place for people undertaking training and employment through this scheme. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Economic Development Team had a proven track record in supporting the long term unemployed either direct or through the community and voluntary sector and had a strong existing network of contacts.

A Member sought clarification on the differences in 3,754 residents unemployed and 18,750 workless as referred to in the report. The Employment Development Officer informed Members that workless meant people who were unemployed and economically inactive, for example in receipt of incapacity/sickness benefits. In response to a Member's question the Employment Development Officer confirmed that the Council did not have responsibility to monitor where employers paid the minimum wage, but did have a Worksmart Officer who advised business on the Human Resources function, legal requirements and contractual issues.

The report referred to the creation of jobs within the Council under this

scheme and reassurance was sought that these jobs would not replace current posts. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that one of the criteria for this scheme was that additional jobs should be created and this was closely monitored.

Members were generally very supportive of the scheme and were pleased to see that this funding would provide training to people and would hopefully lead to permanent jobs being secured.

### **Decision**

The Future Jobs Fund bid submitted by Hartlepool Borough Council to the Department of Work and Pensions which will focus on providing new additional jobs to be created for the benefit of Hartlepool residents be supported.

## **25. Cabinet Contingency Fund** (*The Mayor*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval from Cabinet for a donation towards the costs of the Hartlepool Special Olympics Group attending the 2009 Special Games in Leicester.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Hartlepool Special Olympics Group had requested support for the 34 athletes and 13 escorts to the National Special Games representing the Northern Region. The Group had raised funding towards attending the week long event to cover the costs of the competitors, their escorts, competition fees and transport. However, there was currently a shortfall of £1020 which included £750 for a 49 seat coach to transport the team to Leicester and back and £270 for the costs associated with hiring a mini-bus during the event.

The Mayor informed Members that the Hartlepool Special Olympics Group had contacted him to request any assistance that may be available from the Council. Cabinet was asked to consider the request from the Group and meet the shortfall with funding from the Cabinet Contingency Fund.

The Mayor commented that he had been fortunate to attend the last event of this kind and the people involved were tremendous ambassadors for the

town and he hoped Members agreed to help support this event.

### **Decision**

Cabinet agreed to support the Hartlepool Special Olympics Group and fund the £1,020 shortfall in their costs to attend the National Special Olympics in Leicester from the Cabinet Contingency Fund.

## **26. Local Area Agreement (LAA) Quarter 4 (2008/9) Summary of Performance Report** *(Head of Community Strategy)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of performance in delivering the Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008-11.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The LAA includes 32 priority outcomes, structured around the eight Community Strategy Themes. This report presents a summary of performance against the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to March 2009. The Chief Executive added that the auditors had been impressed by how Hartlepool operated.

It was noted that full details of progress across all outcomes, indicators and actions was contained within the Local Area Agreement Delivery and Improvement Plan, Progress Update: Quarter 4 (January-March) and was available via the Hartlepool Partnership website ([www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk)).

### **Decision**

The current position with regard to performance was noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 am.

**P J DEVLIN**  
**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 17 July 2009**