

# **CABINET**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

22 December 2009

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor Robbie Payne (Deputy Mayor) (Finance & Performance Portfolio Holder) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves (Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder),  
Gerard Hall (Adult Services Portfolio Holder).  
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),  
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder),

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive  
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Nicola Bailey, Director of Child and Adult Services  
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer  
Chris Little, Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Danny Dunleavy, Youth Offending Service Manager  
Steve Hilton, Assistant Public Relations Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **139. Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) and Peter Jackson (Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder).

### **140. Declarations of interest by members**

None.

### **141. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2009**

Confirmed.

## **142. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2010/2011 To 2013/2014 – Formal Scrutiny Proposals** *(Corporate Management Team)*

### **Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

### **Purpose of report**

To enable Cabinet to reconsider the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in the light of the latest position, consider feedback on the initial proposal and to determine the proposals it wishes to put forward for formal Scrutiny.

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

The Deputy Mayor indicated that the report provided a detailed overview of the financial issues affecting the Council in relation to:

- The background for the initial consultation proposals
- Changes since those initial proposals and the implications for:
  - The development of the 2009/2010 Outturn Strategy;
  - Capital Programme 2010/2011 to 2013/2014;
  - General Fund and Council Tax 2010/2011 to 2013/2014.

The Deputy Mayor reported the report built upon the development work on the budget that began with Cabinet's initial consultation proposals in September and updated for the feedback from that consultation round and the latest information available on issues facing the Council. Cabinet had now to consider what proposals to put forward for formal scrutiny consideration.

The report identified the continuing National problems and uncertainties particularly for 2011 onwards, although the 2010 position has been confirmed as previously indicated by government. The Deputy Mayor considered that thanks were due to the minister for this achievement in what is a difficult time. The local changes that needed to be considered were set out in section 3.2 of the report. There were a number of financial risks facing the Council identified in section 3.3 of the report, which over a period of time total £4.8m. A strategy proposal for dealing with these risks in the early years was set out in section 3.4 of the report together with the consequent outturn strategy.

In section 3.5 it was proposed that the residual deficit for 2010/11 be funded from the revenue monies set aside in the budget strategy for the Mill Houses replacement which is unlikely to be committed in that year.

Feedback from the consultations to date, which has been supportive, were set out in the appendices to the report for Cabinet's consideration.

The report included information on the Capital Programme for 2010/11.

Scrutiny, when considering the last monitoring reports, had expressed interest in the development of proposal through the SCRAPT group and the Deputy Mayor commented that he considered that this was something Cabinet could support.

Cabinet questioned the reallocation of the budget contribution to the replacement of the Mill House leisure centre and if the centre was actually going to be replaced. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods commented that the replacement of the Mill House scheme was intrinsically linked to Hartlepool United Football Club. Movement on the discussions with the club was, however, slow. If the scheme was to be reconsidered, Cabinet would need to revisit the whole of the plans for the development. In response to questions on the skate park development, the Director indicated that £70,000 had been allocated to the Rossmere scheme. In terms of a development for the town centre, an update would be circulated to Cabinet members.

Members also questioned the schemes that were to be included in the SCRAPT proposals. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that there were around twenty schemes in the list and details would be circulated to Cabinet.

The rise in the charges for cremations was also queried. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that the rise was part of a previous Portfolio Holder decision. The support for those on low incomes was questioned and the Director indicated that there was no specific scheme in place. The Director of Child and Adult Services indicated that there was support for funeral costs for vulnerable adults supported by the department.

### **Decision**

That the following proposals, based on the original proposals considered by Cabinet in September modified were necessary for changing circumstances, be referred to scrutiny for consultation and comment -

### **2009/2010 Proposed Outturn Strategy**

1. The proposed creation of a risk reserve of initially £2m as set out in section 3.6 of the report, together with a Looked After Children's reserve.
2. That the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 total LABGI allocations of £80,000 support the 2011/2012 budgets.
3. Capital Programme 2010/2012 to 2013/2014
4. That Cabinet confirms its commitment to use Unsupported Prudential Borrowing for the following local priorities in 2010/2011:

	£'000
SCRAPT Priorities	1,200
Community Safety Initiatives	150
Disabled Adaptations	50
Neighbourhood Forum Minor Works	156

5. That Cabinet wishes to review the continuation of the above priorities in 2011/2012 and beyond as part of the comprehensive review of budget priorities in 2010
6. That Cabinet wishes to confirm its commitment to use £3m of Unsupported Prudential Borrowing for the replacement of Mill House but in 2010/2011 take a temporary revenue saving of £0.3m.
7. That Cabinet wishes to support the proposal to use Prudential Borrowing to replace the cremators during 2010/2011 and to repay this loan from 2011/2012 by increasing the cost of an adult cremation by £90, in addition to the normal inflationary increases.

#### **2010/2011 Budget**

8. That Cabinet supports the proposed corporate efficiencies and savings of £1.75m.
9. That Cabinet supports a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.5% for 2010/11.
10. That Cabinet supports the proposals for allocating the £1.5m headroom to fund budget pressures and the budget contingency as detailed in the previous report to Cabinet.
11. That Cabinet wishes to confirm that no Budget Priorities will be funded.
12. That Cabinet supports the income proposals set out in Appendix B to the report.
13. That Cabinet wishes to respond to Central Government on the Settlement.

#### **2011/12 to 2013/14**

14. That Cabinet supports indicative Council Tax increases of 2.5% for 2011/12 and 2012/13 and 3.9% for 2013/14.

### **143. Business Transformation – Service Delivery Options Review Programme Report** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the Service Delivery Options (SDO) review programme and the delivery plans for the year one review programme.

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

The Assistant Chief Executive reported on the Delivery plans for the Service Delivery Options (SDO) reviews previously agreed by Cabinet as being part of year one of the programme for this element of the Business Transformation programme and outlining the timescales for the first reviews.

The programme has commenced and submitted as Appendix 1 to the report were the summaries of the delivery plans for the Year 1 SDOs

The Year One programme includes -

- Children's Social Care
- Connexions / Youth Service
- Supporting People and Strategic Commissioning (Adults)
- User Property and Finance (Child and Adult Services)
- Facilities Management
- Building Consultancy and Engineering Consultancy
- Waste Management
- Reprographics
- Human Resources

In addition as part of the Service Delivery Option (SDO) reviews there were a number of other reviews currently ongoing that were included as part of the programme and also have associated targets attached. The reviews, and those other elements of work included in the report, had an overall target of £1.4M. The reviews would be submitted to Cabinet in 'bundles' rather than all together.

In response to questions on the role of the Business Transformation Board when the proposals would also be submitted to Scrutiny, the Assistant Chief Executive commented that the Business Transformation Board considered all the initial proposals and recommended and/or commented on the proposals to be submitted to Cabinet. Decision making on the proposals lay clearly with Cabinet. Scrutiny may not wish to consider all the SDO's and was likely to focus on those where Members saw an effect on front line service delivery. The Chief Executive commented that there were some very difficult decisions for Members to consider as part of the process. Should Scrutiny not support some of the proposals put forward as part of the process, the question would need to be asked as to where else the savings were to come from, as savings did need to be made.

The Chief Executive also indicated in response to a Member question that there were service areas, such as social work provision to children and vulnerable adults that the authority simply could not be allowed to come under additional pressure due to their sensitive nature. That would, however, mean that there would be additional pressure to make savings in other areas. The Chief Executive circulated at the meeting a document produced by CIPFA and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executive's) which outlined that local authorities needed to be prepared for budget reductions of around 5% over the next two years. Hartlepool had already been working on such an approach for next year's budget.

Members commented that there had already been a number of staff departures, with more recently approved. There was concern that the management structure was not eroded to the extent that front line staff and services started to suffer due to a lack of management and support. Where

the authority did well in terms of service provision, inspection frequently showed that was due to good management and support.

**Decision**

That the scope, inclusions and timescales for the reviews be noted.

**144. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), Ofsted Children Services Annual Rating and Annual Performance Assessment Report 2008/09 Adult and Social Care Services** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To update Cabinet on the results of the Comprehensive Area Assessment that came into effect from 1 April 2009. Cabinet was informed of the new inspection regime in March 2009 with a report outlining the overarching principles of CAA. This report briefly describes the results from the first year of the CAA inspection. The report also details the Ofsted Children Services Annual Rating and the Annual Performance Assessment Report 2008/09 Adult and Social Care Services.

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

The CAA is a more demanding inspection regime than its predecessor, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), and not only looks at how the Council is performing but also how the council and its partners are working together to improve the community as a whole. Due to these changes the scores from CPA and CAA are not directly comparable. CAA brings together the work of the following seven inspectorates to provide an overview of how successfully the local organisations are working together to improve what matters locally.

The report says 'Partners in Hartlepool are working well with local people in their own neighbourhood and communities'. The Area Assessment for Hartlepool currently has no green flags but one red flag for tackling the harm caused by alcohol. Dangerous drinking and the harm caused by alcohol are increasing in Hartlepool. Partnerships across the North East of England have agreed a new approach to address the problem, but detailed service plans and increases in long term funding have not yet been agreed in Hartlepool. It is essential that this funding is provided to put the strategy into action. Without this the Audit Commission believe that improvements on the necessary scale are unlikely.

The Audit Commission assessed the effectiveness of each council based on Use of Resources and Performance. This uses four themes, 3 from Use of Resources and a Performance Management theme. A judgement has been made for each theme using the Audit Commission's point scale from 1

to 4, with 4 being the highest. For Use of Resources 2008/09 Hartlepool Borough Council has been awarded an overall score of 3. A break down of that result was set out in the report.

For the Performance Management Theme a score of 3 was awarded. Combined with the Use of Resources score of 3, this gives the Council an overall Organisational assessment of 3.

Ofsted has rated the Council's children's services as performing well (score of 3 out of 4). Most childcare and schools are rated good or outstanding and none are inadequate. Schools prepare pupils well for learning and results are improving.

The Care Quality Commission has rated the Council's adult social care as excellent (the highest possible rating) outcomes from social care services. A total of 21% of authorities nationally were assessed as performing excellently with regards to Adult Social Care. Hartlepool Council sits in this category, along side only one other Tees Valley Authority and a further three North East Authorities.

The Assistant Chief Executive indicated that the organisational assessment was 3. It was expected that only around 7% of all authorities would be classified with the top score of 4, which equated to around ten or eleven Councils.

Members discussed the results reported and wished to extend their thanks and congratulations to all staff who had been involved in bringing services up to these standards. Cabinet was concerned that some scores, such as that for use of resources, seemed particularly low when they were aware of the work being undertaken in this area. The Assistant Chief Executive commented that much depended upon the criteria utilised by the Audit Commission's inspectors. The inspectors had strict criteria as this was a national standard. This didn't accommodate for example, the informal communication with members on budget's etc; as this was not 'seen' it did not contribute. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the report did comment that the authority did plan effectively but this didn't come through in the scores.

The Chief Executive did feel that there were some preconceived ideas that Hartlepool was too small to be a unitary authority. Yet Hartlepool had proved its ability to adapt and change and manage its finances properly. Hartlepool consistently achieved a budget within a 1% variance at the end of the year which some larger authorities couldn't achieve.

The Deputy Mayor asked that Cabinet's and the Mayor's best wishes for the season be passed onto all staff. Members also highlighted the hard work undertaken by gritting staff over the past few days due to the heavy snowfalls.

### **Decision**

That the report and the results achieved by the Council and its partners be welcomed and noted.

## **145. 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 146 Youth Offending Service – Results of the Core Case inspection of youth offending work; Para 10 – Information which (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7; and (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Minute 147 OFSTED Unannounced Inspection of Safeguarding Services; Para 10 – Information which (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7; and (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **146. Youth Offending Service – Results of the Core Case Inspection of Youth Offending** *(Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection))*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To brief Cabinet on the results of the Core Case inspection of youth offending work.

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

A report on the Core Case inspection of youth offending work has been completed by HM Chief Inspector of Probation. The inspection examined a representative sample of youth offending cases from the area and has judged how often the Public Protection and the Safeguarding aspects of the work were done to a sufficiently high level of quality. The report is under a publication embargo until 13 January 2010.



### **Decision**

That a report be submitted to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity when an action plan addressing the recommendations within the report has been developed.

## **147. Ofsted Unannounced Inspection of Safeguarding Services** *(Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Targeted Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To brief Cabinet on the results of the unannounced inspection of safeguarding services undertaken by Ofsted on 24 and 25 November 2009.

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

An unannounced inspection of safeguarding services was undertaken by Ofsted in November 2009. Verbal feedback and a draft letter of findings had been received by the local authority. The final letter of findings of the inspection is under a publication embargo until 23 December 2009.

### **Decision**

1. That the Mayor sends a letter of thanks to the former Director of Children's Services for her work, much of which had led to the report received.
2. That the Mayor also sends a letter of thanks to the Assistant Director for her leadership in this area.
3. That all staff in Children's and Adults Care services, together with those in the Youth Offending Team be thanked for their hard work during the year in dealing with often very difficult circumstances and workloads.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 a.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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