

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

10 March 2010

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

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Robbie Payne (Deputy Mayor) (Finance & Performance Portfolio Holder)
Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)
Peter Jackson (Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder)
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Also Present: Councillor G Lilley, Greatham Ward Councillor
Brian Walker, Treasurer, Greatham Community Association
Dorothy Clark, Chair, Greatham Community Association

Officers: Andrew Atkin (Assistant Chief Executive)
Peter Devlin (Chief Solicitor)
Mike Ward (Chief Financial Officer)
Joanne Machers (Chief Personnel Officer)
Chris Little (Assistant Chief Financial Officer)
Graham Frankland (Assistant Director, Resources)
Stuart Green (Assistant Director, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)
Dale Clark (Estates Manager, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)
Alan Dobby (Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)
Denise Ogden (Assistant Director, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)
John Mennear (Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)
Chris Hart (Planning and Commissioning Manager)
Peter Davies (Principal Youth Officer)
Steve Hilton (Public Relations Officer)
Denise Wimpenny (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

199. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Pamela Hargreaves (Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) and Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

200. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Victor Tumilty declared a personal interest in Minute 205. An interest was also declared later in the meeting as referred to in Minute 210.

201. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2010

Confirmed

202. School Meals Charges (*Director of Child and Adult Services and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Tests (i) and (ii) apply

Purpose of report

To consider an increase in charges for school meals from April 2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder presented the report which outlined the underlying problem in relation to the pricing of meals provided by the Schools Catering Service, the potential funding of a partial subsidy and the resulting options for price increases.

The current charges to schools are £1.65 (primary) and £1.85 (secondary) per paid meals. Schools are reimbursed the cost of free school meals from dedicated schools grant formula funding and recover the cost of paid meals from charges to pupils. These charges usually rise each September in line with the School Catering Service annual review.

The costs of the in-house catering team had risen in recent years including the effects on job evaluation and the demand for meals had also decreased. The charges to schools and parents had not been increased in response. Provision for all additional job evaluation costs had been included in the budget, however, unfortunately the net result was still a significant deficit for the School Catering Service which must be addressed for 2010/11.

Assuming a level of efficiency saving and potential subsidy, the charges for a paid meal would need to increase to £1.80 and £2.00 for 2010/11, details of which were set out in the report together with the financial and risk considerations.

Schools had been asked to contribute a subsidy towards the service, however, this option was declined and, as such, the increase, must be passed on to parents and the DSG for free school meals.

The options were to implement a full 15p meal increase in April or a 5p increase in April followed by a possible further rise in September, subject to completion of the SDO process and discussions with schools.

In response to a request for clarification regarding the level of increase in the previous year, the Assistant Director reported that school meals had increased by 5p in September 2009. The increase had not been accounted for in the budget as it was envisaged that schools would fund the subsidy. However, in a recent consultation meeting head teachers had indicated that they could not support a subsidy.

Discussion ensued with regard to the impact of job evaluation on the budget, the cost of school meals per pupil, the possible reasons as to why demand had decreased and the importance of healthy eating initiatives. Members were of the view that schools should be encouraged to introduce a policy to ensure children remained on the premises during lunch breaks which should increase the take-up of school meals and reduce cleaning costs in the neighbouring areas.

Decision

That a 15p increase in school meals charges be implemented from 1 April 2010.

203. Additional Information in respect of Youth Work in Greatham – Greatham Community Centre Lease Between Hartlepool Borough Council and the Master and Brethren of the Hospital of God *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies.

Purpose of report

To provide additional information in respect of the financial implications for Greatham Community Association of the Council relinquishing the lease currently held between Hartlepool Borough Council and the Master and Brethren of the Hospital of God.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided background information to the report considered by Cabinet on 8 February 2010 which recommended that the lease between Hartlepool Borough Council and the Hospital of God was not renewed after 3 May 2010. It was requested that the item be deferred pending clarification and further consideration of the financial arrangements. The Greatham Community Association had provided additional information about their expected costs and income during the first year of taking over the lease, details of which were attached as a confidential appendix to the report.

The figure proposed for the youth service was quoted as £3,000. However, in the Cabinet report of 8 February 2010, it was noted that the service had budgeted for rent of up to £5,000 which, if agreed at the higher figure, would reduce the Community Association's projected deficit by £2,000.

Cabinet were requested to reconsider the recommendations as set out in the report of 8 February 2010, a copy of which was attached at Appendix A. to the report.

The Chair of Greatham Community Association and Councillor G Lilley, who were in attendance at the meeting highlighted that funding was required to update the various facilities and reported that in the event that rents were increased for users this may result in a reduction in services provided.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential sources of financial assistance and following a suggestion that grant funding may be available from the community pool or other sources, the Assistant Director of Child and Adult Services advised of the pressures faced by the community pool scheme at the moment and the strict criteria that must be adhered to. However, the Assistant Director stated that the options available could be further explored with the community centre direct following the meeting.

Members acknowledged that the community centre was a valued and well utilised community facility and suggested that in the event that grant funding was not successful the option to utilise a contribution from the Cabinet Contingency Fund could be explored.

Decision

- (i) That the lease between Hartlepool Borough Council and the Hospital of God is not renewed after 3 May 2010.
- (ii) The Council's responsibilities under the terms of the lease, be discharged.
- (iii) That the provision of youth work continues for two evenings per week in Greatham in the most appropriate way and dependent on

- developments regarding the availability of the Community Centre.
- (iv) That continued advice and support be provided by the Council to the Community Centre Management Committee in respect of acquiring the lease and during the transition period.
 - (v) In the event that grant funding was not successful the option to utilise a contribution from the Cabinet Contingency Fund, be examined.

204. Business Transformation – Quarterly Programme Update *(Assistant 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 November 2009 and to provide an outline of forthcoming activity.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the report provided an overview of the current status of the programme and forthcoming reports which would 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.

In relation to the key risks, as detailed in the report, the Assistant Chief Executive reiterated the complexity of the programme and the need to ensure that potential efficiencies were not double counted. The Service Delivery Options (SDO) element of the programme had been set an ambitious target as part of the overall programme. The original target of £4.6M was over half of the overall projected programme savings and required significant innovation and change to deliver this.

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that overall the Transformation Programme was proceeding broadly in line with the originally agreed scope

and timescale. There had been some slippage in individual workstreams against original targets. At this stage these slippages were not significantly affecting the programme.

The programme of service delivery options had the single largest contribution to the overall financial savings of the programme. Any decision to not implement available options in respect of these reviews would leave a subsequent financial deficit in the Medium Term Financial Strategy which would require addressing. It was part of the overall ethos of the programme that a managed often difficult approach to the change was required to avoid the need to resort to wholesale salami slicing of services and budgets.

In response to a request for clarification, the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Personnel Officer reported on the voluntary redundancy/early retirement process as part of the Business Transformation Programme.

In relation to asset management and property disposal, a Member commented on the benefits of delaying any sale of assets until the property market improved to which the Assistant Director advised that as a result of the management structure reviews and the rationalisation of administration buildings, less office space was required to accommodate staff. The advantages of disposal at this stage and their contribution to achieving the efficiencies required were outlined.

Decision

That progress made to date on the implementation of the programme and forthcoming reports to Cabinet, be noted.

205. Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2009/2010 (*Head of Community Safety and Prevention*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

The report provided information and detail on the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2009/10 and sought support of the Cabinet to the activity and performance management framework in the Plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented the report which outlined the requirements to produce an annual Adult Drug Treatment Plan, the financial and performance arrangements and provided details of the priorities for 2010/11 to deliver an effective drug treatment and support service.

The report included a draft of the plan, attached at Appendix 1 to which

Members were advised that there was no requirement to amend the plan as a result of feedback from the National Treatment Agency (NTA).

The 2010/11 draft plan illustrated that there had been little change to the drug profile of the town. Heroin continued to be the adult primary illegal drug of choice. However, there was an increase in the use of powder cocaine and also drugs obtained via the internet.

The Safety Hartlepool Partnership had recently been advised that there would be an 18% increase in the pooled treatment budget on last years allocation. The Drug Intervention Programme funding however, had reduced by 11.77% from £618,145 in 2009/10 to £545,378 for 2010/11.

Decision

Cabinet noted the report and confirmed its support to the activity and performance management framework of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2010/11.

206. Quarter 3 – Capital and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring Report 2008/2009 *(Chief Financial Officer)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Council's overall Capital budget for 2009/2010 and the spending programmes where the Council acts as the Accountable Body for the period to 31 December 2009.

The report considers the following areas: -

- Capital Monitoring
- Accountable Body Programme Monitoring

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder presented the report which provided detailed monitoring information for each Portfolio up to 31 December 2009.

Decision

That the contents of the report, be noted.

207. Quarter 3 – Corporate Plan and Revenue Financial Management Report 2009/2010 *(Corporate Management Team)*

Type of decision

Non key

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.
- To provide details of progress against the Council's overall revenue budget for 2009/2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder reported on progress towards achieving the actions within the Corporate Plan using the traffic light system of Green, Amber and Red. The report provided an overview of Council performance with 86% of the key performance indicators (KPIs) judged to be either on or above target, with separate sections providing more detailed information for each Portfolio Holder to consider.

The report included details of the Revenue Financial Management report which covered the following areas:

- Progress against Departmental and Corporate Budgets and High Risk Budget Areas;
- Detailed Revenue Monitoring by Portfolio;
- Progress against Efficiency Savings Targets identified in the 2009/2010 Budget Strategy;
- Performance against Budget Pressures to be treated as Contingency Items;
- Progress against Departmental Salary Turnover Targets;
- Progress against Area Based Grant budgets;
- Key Balance Sheet information.

Decision

That the current position with regard to performance and revenue monitoring, be noted.

208. Cleveland College of Art and Design: Expansion Plans – Potential Sale of Leadbitter Buildings, Archive Building and Municipal Buildings *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

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

Purpose of report

The report updated Cabinet on recent discussions with Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD) about the proposed acquisition of Leadbitter Buildings, the Archive Building and the Municipal Buildings.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided background information following consideration of this matter at Cabinet on 22 February when Cabinet authorised further discussions with the College with a focus on the detail of discussions at that Cabinet meeting.

A detailed update including proposed terms and conditions was attached as confidential appendices to the report. [paragraph 3, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)].

In considering the proposed sale of the buildings, Cabinet's attention was drawn to the key benefits/issues, as set out in the report.

Both the Council and the CCAD had sought expert independent reports on potential use and valuations. The agreed valuation was in line with those reports and reflected the restricted use of the buildings, their listed status, condition location and planning considerations.

As the Council must rationalise property in line with the requirements of business transformation efficiency targets, this approach from the CCAD presented an ideal opportunity to secure the sale of the buildings to a "special" purchaser in the current economic recession whilst supporting the broader regeneration and skills agenda of the town.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the benefits of selling the properties, the risks associated with the sale and the long term sustainability of the College remaining in the town. Whilst the majority of Members were supportive of selling these buildings and thereby helping to reinforce the Art College's

presence in the town, one Member commented on the disadvantages of sale as opposed to a leasehold arrangement and was of the view that any decision to sell should be taken by full Council. Members were advised that discussions with the College had indicated that a leasehold arrangement would be far more difficult to pursue, in light of its funding arrangements.

AT THIS POINT IN THE MEETING COUNCILLOR TUMILTY LEFT THE MEETING

IT WAS NOTED THAT THE MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE. THE MAYOR INDICATED THAT (AS PERMITTED UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 AND THE CONSTITUTION) HE WOULD EXERCISE HIS POWERS OF DECISION AND THAT HE WOULD DO SO IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WISHES OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT, INDICATED IN THE USUAL WAY. EACH OF THE DECISIONS SET OUT IN THE DECISION RECORD WERE CONFIRMED BY THE MAYOR ACCORDINGLY.

Decision

That the sale of Leadbitter Buildings, the Archive Building and the Municipal Buildings to Cleveland College of Art and Design, in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in a confidential appendix to the report, be approved.

209. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during part of the discussion on the previous item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4, namely information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

210. Car Allowance Review (*Chief Personnel Officer and Chief Financial Officer*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) applies

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report was set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The issues considered by Cabinet were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

The decision is set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 10.26 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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