

# **CABINET**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

10 January 2011

The meeting commenced at 9.15 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Jonathan Brash (Portfolio Holder for Performance Portfolio Holder)  
Robbie Payne (Deputy Mayor) (Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder)  
Gerard Hall (Adult & Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)  
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)  
Hilary Thompson (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

### **Also present:**

Councillor Chris Simmons, Vice Chair, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive  
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive,  
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer  
Nicola Bailey, Director of Child and Adult Services  
Alison Mawson, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Protection  
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources  
Nigel Johnson, Housing Regeneration and Policy Manager  
Louise Wallace, Assistant Director, Public Health  
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager  
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **142. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pamela Hargreaves and Peter Jackson.

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

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting, see minute 149.

#### **144. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2010**

Received.

#### **145. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2011/12 to 2014/15 – Specific Grant Issues** *(Corporate Management Team)*

##### **Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

##### **Purpose of report**

To provide details of the changes to Specific Grants and enable Members to determine a proposed strategy for managing these changes.

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

As reported to Cabinet on 20 December, a number of Specific Grants had been transferred into the Formula Grant. It was expected that these changes would require the Council to implement further reductions in expenditure owing to the cuts in Grant Funding. A detailed assessment of these changes had been undertaken and the key issues were detailed in the report, together with a proposed strategy for managing these changes.

The detailed assessment of these changes will enable Cabinet to determine a proposed strategy for managing these changes. These proposals will then be referred to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in January as part of the formal budget consultation process.

The Chief Finance Officer informed Cabinet that the new Personal Social Grant will not be paid as a separate grant and has been included in the core Formula grant. This means that the only flexibility for managing the 2011/12 budget is the £1.7m Transitional grant. If Members adopt option 1 this funding will be sufficient to fund estimated redundancy costs of £1.6m arising from the proposed budget reductions. In relation to Option 2 this reduced funding would only be sufficient to extend employment of staff at risk of redundancy for part of the year as £3.5m would be needed to extend employment for all of 2011/12. This factor and the impact of delaying budget reductions and redundancy costs to 2012/13 makes option 2 unsustainable.

During the discussions that followed Members noted that as part of the Government's budget announcement, it was stated that no local authority

would suffer more than 8.9% cuts in spending power. However, a number of the cuts to be implemented were significantly higher than 8.9%.

Members were concerned that the areas identified for cuts were absolutely vital to the provision of services and would affect front line services as well as back office functions. The Mayor informed Cabinet that he had written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in response to the proposed allocations.

The Vice Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee confirmed that Scrutiny Members were as appalled as Cabinet Members on the current situation and felt that this was unfair treatment of this local authority. It was noted that the reality of the cuts was significantly different, around 6% more, than the figures quoted in the press.

It was noted that discussions were taking place on a daily basis to examine alternative options and protect as many services as possible. However, there was an overwhelming feeling that the Government were showing complete disregard to the level of deprivation in areas like Hartlepool. A Member commented that it would be interesting to explore how the proposed budget cuts were affecting other areas of the country where the levels of deprivation were not as high.

### **Decision**

The proposed allocations detailed in Appendices A and B were approved and referred to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee as part of the budget process.

## **146. Safer Hartlepool Partnership's Draft Strategy 2011-2014** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework.

### **Purpose of report**

To initiate the Council's consideration of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's (SHP) strategy for 2011-2014 as part of the Budget and Policy framework.

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

The Mayor presented a report which explained the legal context for the Council, in respect of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's strategy development and outlined the legal process set for the production of the

Partnership Plan, which comprised the 3 year strategy and annual priorities. The report detailed the strategy objectives for 2011-2014 and annual priorities for 2011-12.

Members were asked to note that the report included some minor amendments to the Partnership Plan's objectives for 2011-2014 and whilst it was acknowledged that this would be another area to be challenged by reduced funding it was noted that the partnership working in place was very strong.

Whilst it was noted that crime was reducing in Hartlepool, the alcohol related anti-social behaviour incidents and hospital admissions had increased, as well as the alcohol related mortality rates. It was acknowledged that the recent change in the Council's Licensing Policy would go some way to tackling these issues but was only one of many avenues that should be explored to deal with this problem.

A Member noted that there had been a reduction of 34% in young people entering the criminal justice system and this was something that should be recognised.

The Mayor confirmed that the draft strategy should be submitted to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for consideration and not the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum as outlined in the report.

### **Decision**

That in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, Cabinet was recommended to refer the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's draft strategy attached to the report as Appendix A to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for their consideration.

## **147. Housing Adaptations Policy 2010-2013** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision – Tests (i) and (ii) apply, reference RN 34/10.

### **Purpose of report**

To approve the first Hartlepool Housing Adaptations Policy for 2010-2013, its Review and the adoption of the Implementation Plan. The Policy set out the key objectives that the Council and its partners will work towards achieving in order to contribute to supporting people to live as independently as possible. The Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

(DFG's) in the private sector and other rehousing options provide the background for proposals to reduce waiting times for grant approvals and ensure that the most effective use was made of available funding.

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

The Mayor presented a report which set out the proposals arising from a review of Disabled Facilities Grants, alternative options and suggestions to reduce waiting times and alleviate pressure on the Council's budgets, offer a seamless service to disabled people and ensure the most effective use was made of available funding.

It was recognised that the biggest challenge of this policy was to ensure that people have houses fit for purpose working in conjunction with the Allocations Policy.

The Vice Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee referred to the comments from the Committee in particular 7.1(v) and suggested that this should be amended to refer to Members being included in the consultation process for all 'major' policies. In addition it was noted that this policy had been circulated to Members individually and it was considered that a more effective way may be to refer future consultation to scrutiny.

A Member commented that the British Legion had created a handy man service and the Director of Child and Adult Services confirmed that the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Dept managed the handyman scheme but that we would work with the British Legion where this was appropriate. It was noted that whilst the building of new homes to the Lifetime Homes Standard should be encouraged, it was recognised that funding of adaptations to older properties was still an issue to be considered especially in view of increasing demand in the future.

### **Decision**

- (i) The adoption and publication of the draft Housing Adaptations Policy 2010-2013 as attached at Appendix 1 was approved.
- (ii) The supporting Implementation Plan attached at Appendix 2 was approved and the actions have been developed by officers based on their best knowledge and current circumstances.
- (iii) The supporting review attached at Appendix 3 was approved.
- (iv) The Diversity Impact Assessment attached at Appendix 4 was noted.
- (v) The establishment of a flexibly convened Adaptations Operations Panel based on the draft Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 5 was approved.
- (vi) The facilitating of other forms of assistance such as loans for people waiting for DFG; costs involved in developing a support package for rehousing as an alternative and assistance for hire of equipment for terminal illness was approved.

- (vii) The potential introduction of recharges to owners in appropriate circumstances and following best practice was approved.

**148. Hartlepool Partnership and Council Proposed Outcome Framework 2011-2015** (*Head of Performance and Partnerships*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the proposed Hartlepool Partnership and Council outcome framework 2011-2015.

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

The Mayor presented a report which set out the proposed outcome framework for the Hartlepool Partnership and Council which will be used as the framework for developing Departmental plans, the Corporate Plan and the Hartlepool Partnership Performance Management Framework for 2011/12. The report included the service planning timetable setting out the key dates in the agreement of the Departmental and Corporate plans and the Hartlepool Partnership Delivery and Improvement Plan.

The Assistant Director (Resources) asked Members to note that as the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department already undertook a significant amount of work on raising community awareness as part of its normal day to day business and service planning it was felt appropriate to remove Outcome 27 from the proposed outcome framework for 2011-15.

**Decision**

The Hartlepool Partnership and Council outcome framework for 2011-15 was agreed.

**149. Selective Licensing of Private Landlords – Additional Areas** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

## **Purpose of report**

To consider extending the areas covered by a selective licensing scheme for private landlords.

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

The Mayor presented a report which briefly outlined the legal framework for selective licensing, set out the requirements and process for introducing further licensing areas and identified a timetable from implementing the process leading to declaration of new areas. It was noted that the majority of landlords had joined the voluntary registration scheme and welcomed the introduction of this scheme to additional areas in the town.

A discussion ensued on the timescale for new areas to be considered for inclusion within the scheme and it was acknowledged that this may be shortened slightly although there was a clear process of decision making that needed to be fulfilled.

A Member referred to a valuation report produced by New Deal in the Communities and questioned the effectiveness of the scheme already introduced in some areas of the town. Whilst it was recognised by other Members that the scheme did work in some areas, if there was problems associated with the operation of the scheme, these should be examined prior to a further roll-out of the scheme to other areas.

Councillor Hilary Thompson declared a personal interest at this point and noted that as an accredited landlord, she had not been contacted in relation to the way she operated as a landlord. The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Protection noted that it may be that the tenants had been contacted direct and if no problems had been highlighted, the landlord would not need to be contacted.

In conclusion, Members considered that if some residents and residents associations did not feel that the scheme was operating effectively, this should be considered and debated further prior to any extension of the scheme. The Assistant Director (Resources) indicated that as all Members had not had sight of the NDC report, it may be appropriate to review the outcomes of selective licensing, in light of the NDC evaluation report, together with the proposed extension of the selective licensing scheme to new areas.

## **Decision**

A report be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet reviewing the outcomes of the Selective Licensing Scheme and giving details of the evidence to extend the scheme to other areas of the town.

**150. Public Health White Paper – Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England**  
(Director of Child and Adult Services)

**Type of decision**

Information and comments.

**Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the content of the proposed white paper, Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England outlining the future of Public Health in England.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health presented a report which provided a summary of the key proposals and the timescale of process of consultation on this white paper. The Assistant Director, Public Health stressed the importance of health protection by ensuring that robust systems were in place for early intervention and protection to improve outcomes.

A Member commented that whilst this paper was referred to as the preventative agenda, it was not about health professionals 'nannying' individuals about the way they live and telling them what they can and cannot do. However, it was not acceptable that individuals' behaviour could place an unfair burden on the health service.

The amount of income received by the Government through taxation of alcohol and cigarettes was questioned by a Member. The Assistant Director of Public Health indicated that whilst she was not aware of any research done regionally, she would ascertain if any had been done nationally and inform that Member direct.

**Decision**

The report was noted and Members' comments would be incorporated into the consultation process within the Local Authority.



## **151. Adult Social Care: A Strategic Overview** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key, for information only.

### **Purpose of report**

The coalition government set out the direction of travel for adult social care in White Paper and two policy documents.

- A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens
- Think Local Act Personal: Next Steps in Transforming Adult Social Care
- Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS (White Paper)

The report set out the key messages for adult social care services and Cabinet was requested to note the contents.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health presented a detailed report which set out the strategic direction of travel included in the above publications builds on the concordat 'Putting People First' (2007). The focus was on two key components to achieve transformational change in the way services were provided:

- Community based approaches
- Personalised care and support.

These strategic documents deliver the vision that will shape local authorities' practice. They also provide the context to the work of two Commissions which were currently considering reform of both the law and the funding of care and support. A social care White Paper alongside new legislation to establish a modern/financially sustainable framework will be published in 2011.

The principles of personalisation remain at the centre of the new strategy and are underpinned by a leaner more outcomes-focussed and outward-facing role for public sector services.

The emphasis is on:

- Extending the roll out of Personal Budgets (PBs) so that by 2013 all people eligible for social care support and their carers will receive a PB, preferably as a Direct Payment (DP).

- Breaking down the barriers between health, social care and other agencies' funding streams to incentivise prevention action.
- Supporting the creation of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises and enable these groups to have much more involvement in the running of public services.
- Working with a wide range of independent, voluntary and third sector providers, people who use services and their carers to increase their capacity to shape service provision. Local authorities will be expected to expand the number of individual commissioners of services and extend the range of service providers locally, thereby encouraging a robust, diverse market to facilitate choice for people who use services.
- Increasing productivity, efficiency and innovation despite the challenging fiscal context. Cuts to public funding may be the catalyst to bring funding streams together into 'placed-based' budgets with shared outcomes across different organisations and agencies.
- Enabling the social care workforce to play a key role in community development and supporting people to live meaningful lives as active citizens within their communities.
- Mobilising people's own resources, skills and assets to meet their own needs wherever possible and leaving public funding to cover those that cannot be met by those means.
- Addressing both universal services and more targeted provision with advice and information for all citizens irrespective of how their support needs are or may be funded.
- Promoting health and well-being through both councils' new public health functions outlined in the White Paper 'Liberating the NHS' and 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' strategy for public health and by joint working with GP commissioning consortia on the planning and commissioning of services in their local areas.

The Director of Child and Adult Services confirmed that the above document were the first documents to be produced by the new Government outlining their perception of adult social care and continued the theme of local authorities becoming commissioners as opposed to providers. An additional document examining the future of how adult social care would be funded was due to be produced later this year. Members were asked to note that Hartlepool did provide a high quality social care service to a range of people on a preventative and intervention basis but how the review of legislation surrounding social care would impact on future service delivery and funding was unclear at the current time.

In relation to the funding of care, in most areas, residents funding their own residential care would do so at a higher cost than those funded via the local authority. However, Hartlepool operated differently to other local authorities in the region as full fee payers were treated the same as someone funded by the local authority by paying the same cost for residential care. It was not proposed to change these arrangements.

**Decision**

The strategic direction of travel for adult social care services and the implications for the local authority were noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.36 am.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 14 January 2011**