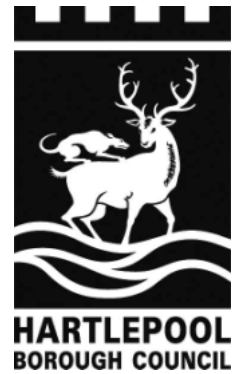


# SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA



**Thursday 7 April 2011**

**at 1.00 pm**

**in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE:**

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, S Akers-Belcher, Cook, Cranney, Flintoff, Griffin, James, London, A Marshall, McKenna, Preece, Richardson, Shaw, Simmons, Thomas and Wells.

Resident Representatives: Evelyn Leck, Linda Shields and Angie Wilcox

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

**3. MINUTES**

- 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2011 *(to follow)*
- 3.2 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2011 *(to follow)*

**4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items

**5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS FROM COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

No items

**6. FORWARD PLAN**

No items

**7. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items

**8. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING/CORPORATE REPORTS**

No items

**9. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 9.1 Call-In of Decision: Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies (specifically the decision taken in relation to Seaton Nursery School):-

- (a) Briefing Note – Scrutiny Manager; and
- (b) Verbal Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

- 9.2 Progress Report – Council Assisted Scheme for the Provision of Household White Goods/Furniture – *Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*

- 9.3 Additional Information Requested During Consideration of the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan – *Scrutiny Manager*

**10. CALL-IN REQUESTS**

No items

**11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Friday 15 April 2011, commencing at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber**

# **SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

18 March 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor: James (In the Chair)

Officers: Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **212. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Christopher Christopher Akers, Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob Cook, Kevin Cranney, Bob Flintoff, Sheila Griffin, Ann Marshall, Chris McKenna, Arthur Preece, Carl Richardson, Jane Shaw, Chris Simmons, Stephen Thomas and Ray Wells.

### **213. Adjournment of Meeting**

In view of unforeseen circumstances after the statutory notice for the meeting had been given, the Chairman had determined prior to the meeting that the meeting be adjourned and reconvened at 12.00 noon and as such Members had been advised accordingly.

The meeting stood adjourned at 10.01 am

**Upon being reconvened on Friday 18 March 2011  
at 12.00 noon in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

### **Present:**

Councillor: Marjorie James (in the Chair)

Councillors: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob Cook, Sheila Griffin, Ann Marshall, Arthur Preece, Chris Simmons, Stephen Thomas and Ray Wells.

Also in attendance:

Councillor Jonathan Brash, Portfolio Holder for Performance  
Edwin Jeffries, Secretary of the Joint Trades Union

Officers: Joanne Machers, Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer  
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
John Morton, Chief Financial and Customer Services Officer  
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **214. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cranney, Flintoff, Richardson and Resident Representative Linda Shields.

A number of Members reported their intention to leave the meeting to attend another conflicting meeting. However, they intended to return to the meeting in order to finalise the recommendations. The Chair indicated that in the absence of a quorum, discussions could continue, however, no recommendations could be made until the Committee was quorate.

## **215. Declarations of Interest**

None

## **216. Minutes**

None

## **217. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None

## **218. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members**

None

## **219. Forward Plan**

None

**220. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

None.

**221. Consideration of financial monitoring/corporate reports**

None.

**222. Call-in Requests**

None.

**223. Cabinet Referral – Business Transformation Programme II – Proposals for the Revenues and Benefits Services – Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Performance – Covering Report** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

Following approval of the timetable, terms of reference and potential areas of inquiry/sources of evidence on 25 February for this referral, the Scrutiny Manager informed Members that the Performance Portfolio Holder had been invited to today's meeting to provide input/evidence to this referral.

The Performance Portfolio Holder reported that Cabinet had considered this proposal in line with the future direction of business transformation around Revenues and Benefits and the potential options to provide the service in a different way to make savings and meet the current budget difficulties. Reference was made to the background to the referral and Cabinet's proposals in relation to the future provision of services and indicated that Scrutiny's views and contribution to the proposals would be welcomed.

With regard to the Department of Works and Pensions grant allocations, a Member queried whether the Revenues budget included any payments from Darlington Council and whether the Council provided any service to Redcar. Members were advised that a bailiff service had been piloted with Darlington and Scrutiny's views were sought in relation to the potential expansion of the bailiff service.

Further details of discussions were set out in Minute 224 below.

**Recommended**

That the information given be noted and discussions be utilised to assist with the Committee's consideration of this referral.

## **224. Cabinet Referral – Business Transformation Programme II – Proposals for the Revenues and Benefits Services – Covering Report** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The report included background information to the referral together with a copy of the report considered by Cabinet and the relevant minute extract, attached at Appendices A and B respectively.

Following the views expressed by Scrutiny during the Revenues and Benefits Service Delivery Review, Cabinet received a further report on 7 February 2011 containing additional information in relation to the delivery of ICT and Revenues and Benefits Services including the potential benefits and risks of a number of options for delivery of the services, a copy of which was attached at Appendix C. Cabinet also considered again approval of a procurement exercise for ICT and Revenues and Benefits services using the OGC Buying Solutions Framework and were unable to make a decision at that time and agreed that proposals in relation to the provision of the Revenues and Benefits Service should be referred to scrutiny for consideration. A copy of the relevant minute was attached at Appendix D.

In relation to ICT proposals, it was noted that these savings would only materialise for the 2012/13 budget if work could commence immediately and that any delay would jeopardise the proposed savings for next year.

The report included the process for consideration of the referral, details of the proposals/options presented to Cabinet on 7 February and details of the core activities and functions of the service.

Scrutiny's views were sought in relation to the following proposed options (including the potential benefits and risks), as outlined in the report, for inclusion in the response back to Cabinet. Further details of these options were outlined within Appendix C of the report:-

- Retention of current arrangements;
- Creation of shared service model with another local authority;
- Creation of shared service approach via a Regional Business Centre model with a private sector partner; and
- Creation of a joint venture vehicle.

Views on the proposals had also been sought from relevant interested bodies and an invitation had been extended to the Trades Union representative to participate in today's meeting.

Details of the additional information requested by the Committee during the scoping of this referral were attached at Appendix E.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:-

- (i) Concerns were expressed that all of the additional information requested by this Committee had not been provided and there were a number of inconsistencies between the structure of the unit and job descriptions.
- (ii) A query was raised as to why £110,000 of the Revenues and Benefits staffing budget had transferred to the Hartlepool Connect as this figure appeared to be high in terms of the number of staff transferred. Members were advised that the £110,000 included employer on costs and six members of staff had transferred across and taken on additional duties. In response to a Member's further concerns regarding other costs that had been met from the Revenues and Benefits budget and not from pooled budgets, the Chief Financial and Customer Services Officer went on to provide clarification in relation to the budget transfer arrangements and approach taken to the use of staff resources within the Contact Centre. Whilst Members recognised the value of this approach, concern was expressed regarding the level of revenues and benefits advice/information and processing work being provided by the transferred staff. Members noted that the funding of the two earlier posts had been transferred from the revenues and benefits budget and that their focus was on the provision of wide ranging / general customer advice. In relation to the other transferred staff, it was suggested that given the amalgamation of duties, there should be some form of contribution to costs from other departmental budgets.
- (iii) In terms of identifying alternative options for delivering the service more efficiently, a number of further queries were raised in relation to the Revenues and Benefits budget, budget transfer arrangements in respect of shared services, the staffing structure and roles and responsibilities of staff to which the Chief Financial and Customer Services Officer provided clarification.
- (iv) A Member queried whether the software maintenance costs could be reduced. The Committee was advised that it was good practice to have a maintenance agreement in place and to ensure the system operated correctly.
- (v) Members discussed national benchmarking data, as set out in Appendix E to the report, the speed of processing new Benefits claims and how the decision to withdraw mobile home visits may have impacted on processing times. Whilst the reasons for withdrawing the processing of claims from claimant's homes via mobile technology was acknowledged, Members were of the firm view that the home visits service should be reintroduced and available to everyone and commented on the benefits as a result. The benefits included improvements to the speed of processing claims, more effective service provision in that a decision would be provided on the day and would result in a reduction in the level

of processing queries. On a practical basis, it was suggested that the scripts previously used should be reintroduced, with the exclusion of wireless connectivity, and that staff utilise laptops and digital cameras/scanners to complete forms and verify documentation required to support applications.

- (vi) In relation to the provision of mobile outreach/home support services and the suggestion that this be reintroduced, Members were of the view that this should be delivered in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, as part of the roll out of Connected Care. In order to deliver the service on a collaborative basis, a protocol and service level agreement would need to be developed to facilitate the sharing of information with partners; and the mobile technology previously utilised by the mobile benefit team be reused, with the exclusion of the 3G connectivity elements of the package which had been the basis of problems in the past.
- (vii) Members were concerned that the current operational arrangements for processing benefits claims via the Contact Centre were not handled by front office staff and claimant's were not given a decision on the day regarding entitlement. The advantages of front office staff processing claims were outlined. The need to explore alternative methods of capturing information electronically was suggested as well as the need to review the operational arrangements for processing benefits claims via the Contact Centre to ensure claimant's were given a decision on the day.
- (viii) The Committee discussed at length the issue of benefit entitlement, the importance of ensuring that those entitled to benefits were identified, the most appropriate methods of communicating with residents in relation to benefits, the links between the Council Tax system and benefits take-up and the benefits of introducing a cross-check process between Council Tax and the Benefits system. Members were advised that checks were not carried out due to the resource implications involved.
- (ix) It was recommended that with effect from 1 April 2011, all Council Tax reminder letters should include reference to an individual's possible entitlement to benefits to assist with payment and should not be of a threatening nature.
- (x) In relation to current ICT arrangements and Council Tax collection payments, Members were of the view that the current ICT system should be able to immediately identify any defaults in payment to enable support to be provided. The benefits of the current ICT software being improved and adapted to identify such issues and to establish a customer profile were highlighted.



- (xi) In response to a request for clarification, the Committee was advised on the recovery process in relation to Council Tax collection and the subsequent benefits advice provided by the Recovery Advice Officer. Members felt that further work was needed in this regard to include developing the skills and knowledge of key stakeholders and partner organisations offering advice and guidance.
- (xii) Following a lengthy discussion in relation to financial inclusion arrangements, the various methods of addressing this issue and providing support to those in financial difficulties, Members commented on the need to introduce a system whereby individuals experiencing payment difficulties be automatically signposted to the relevant independent body for financial advice. It was noted that this issue would form part of Scrutiny's ongoing investigation into face to face financial advice.
- (xiii) **It was noted that the meeting was now inquorate** Further discussion ensued on the current ICT software systems and the various options of capturing information electronically from both the civic centre and outside venues in order to ensure Revenues and Benefits Services was accessible to all. Members felt that the current technology could be adapted to achieve this.
- (xiv) In response to concerns raised regarding the costs incurred in dealing with fraudulent claims, it was confirmed that clarification would be reported back to the Committee.
- (xv) A suggestion was made that in view of the forthcoming changes to the fraud arrangements from 2013 the current vacant Fraud Investigator post be deleted from the establishment. Members were advised that the final details of the proposed changes were awaited. A number of queries were raised in relation to the fraud arrangement to which the Chief Finance and Customer Services Officer provided clarification. Following further debate, it was suggested that a complete rationalisation of the budget/staffing structure for the provision of counter fraud services was needed to prepare for the forthcoming changes and mitigate the future requirement to shed or TUPE staff to the Department of Works and Pensions.
- (xvi) **It was noted that the meeting was now quorate.** Members expressed concern that a vacant Revenues Officer post remained in the structure when it had been agreed, as part of the budget process, that this post be deleted. Members were advised that the post had been deleted. However, the supervisory element of the post had transferred to another member of staff whose salary had increased as a result. Details of the background to this proposal were outlined to which Members highlighted their disappointment that this decision had not been shared with the

Committee. Further concerns were raised that the job description for this post was inaccurate and did not reflect the position outlined by officers. The Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer advised that all job descriptions had not been yet been updated due to the speed of the changes implemented. Following a lengthy debate in relation to the implications of staff operating without accurate job descriptions, the Committee requested that all job descriptions and person specifications be updated by 30 June 2011.

Following a brief adjournment, the meeting reconvened and it was suggested that the meeting move into private session to discuss the confidential elements of the papers provided.

### **Recommended**

The recommendations were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

## **225. 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 discussions for 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) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

The meeting concluded at 4.01 pm

CHAIR

# SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

25 March 2011

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

**Present:**

Councillor: James (In the Chair)

Councillors Cook, Griffin, A Marshall, Preece, Richardson, Simmons, Thomas and Wells

Resident Representatives:  
Linda Shields

**Also Present:**

Councillor Hargreaves, Regeneration and Economic Development  
Portfolio Holder  
Andrew Burnett, Consultant

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer  
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources  
Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Transport and Engineering  
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager  
Carol Jones, Financial Inclusion Officer  
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer  
Dale Clark, Estates, Manager, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

**226. Jackson's Landing "Take Off"** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods presented the report which provided background information to the Jacksons Landing "Take Off" project and an overview of the business case that was to be taken forward in detail to both Cabinet and full Council for approval prior to purchase of the site.

The report included details of the delivery strategy and financial business case as set out in a confidential appendix to the report [paragraph 3, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any

particular person (including the authority holding that information)] together with a summary of the project.

Details of discussions were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

**Recommended**

Details of the Committee's recommendations were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

**227. 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 for the previous item of business and the following items of business on the grounds that they involved 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 No 226 Jackson's Landing "Take Off" paragraph 3 - namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Minute No 228 – Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 February 2011

Minute No 230 – Any Other Business – Call-In of Decision: Community Pool 2011/12 – Briefing Note

**228. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 February 2011**

The closed minutes were confirmed subject to an amendment, details of which were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

**229. Any Other Items which the Chair Considers are Urgent**

The Chair ruled that the following items of business (Minutes 230 and 231) should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

## **230. Any Other Business – Call-In of Decision: Community Pool 2011/12 – Briefing Note** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Scrutiny Manager reported that a call-in notice had been received in relation to a recent decision taken by Grants Committee. The purpose of today's discussion was to consider whether the call-in should be accepted for the reasons set out in the Notice.

Members were referred to the report of the Director of Child and Adult Services and extract of the decision record of the meeting of Grants Committee held on 7 March 2011 relating to the Community Pool together with the call-in notice, copies of which were attached as appendices to the report. Details of the next steps in the process were outlined, as set out in the report.

Details of discussions were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

### **Recommended**

The Committee's recommendations were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

**Following consideration of the previous closed items of business the meeting returned to open session.**

## **231. Any Other Business – Referral from Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development – Bus Services in Hartlepool** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

Members were referred to a referral from the Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder as detailed in Appendix A to the report and clarification was sought on the process/timetable for completion of the referral.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, who was in attendance at the meeting, thanked the Committee for their support in relation to this issue and highlighted the reasons for referral as well as the benefits of working with scrutiny on this issue. The Portfolio highlighted that the sum of £50,000 had been returned to the Council as part of a legal agreement and it was considered that this money be utilised to address the transport issues in the town to provide some form of transport provision for those areas left without a service to which Scrutiny's views were sought.

The Chair emphasised that this request would not be allowed to unpick any of the budget decisions that had been unanimously agreed by Council, which Members of the Committee supported. In response the Portfolio Holder

confirmed that it was not the intention to unpick any of the budget decisions in relation to this issue.

Whilst Members had concerns regarding the impact the withdrawal of bus services placed on the most vulnerable in society, previous concerns were reiterated that excessive subsidies to bus operators could no longer continue. The impact of the continued reduction in Government funding on services were discussed.

In relation to timescales for completion of the referral, whilst Members acknowledged the Portfolio's reasons for an urgent response, Members were of the view that a full scale review could not be undertaken in a timescale of 2 to 3 weeks. However, an interim inquiry could be undertaken and, if necessary, the issue could be carried forward and included in the scrutiny work programme for the next municipal year.

In terms of the process for undertaking this referral, it was suggested that a 5 Member Working Group be established made up of the following Members of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee:-

Councillors James, Simmons, Cranney, Thomas and Griffin

In addition, the Chair outlined the benefits of input from Councillor Cook in this referral process and suggested that Councillor Cook be appointed as a substitute.

#### **Recommended**

- (i) That the referral be formally received.
- (ii) That a Working Group be established to undertake this referral made up of the following Members of this Committee:-  
Councillors James, Simmons, Cranney, Thomas and Griffin  
with Councillor Cook an appointed substitute.

### **228. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 February 2011**

The open element of the minutes were confirmed. The closed minutes having being confirmed earlier in the meeting.

### **232. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2011**

Confirmed

### **233. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2011**

The minutes of 11 March, a copy of which were tabled at the meeting were confirmed subject to the addition of the following recommendation:-

Minute 199 - Forward Plan March to June 2011

- (vi) In the event that £100,00 of ring fenced funding was received to repair potholes, the prioritisation and allocation of this funding be identified through each of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums with final approval of allocation through full Council.

### **234. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 11 March 2011**

In relation to Minute 199 – Ref RN 13/09 – Disposal of Surplus Assets - A Member highlighted that clarification in this regard had not been received under separate cover to which the Scrutiny Manager agreed to follow up with the relevant department.

### **235. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None

### **236. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Christopher Akers-Belcher, Stephen Akers-Belcher, Bob Flintoff , Kevin Cranney and Arthur Preece.

### **237. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors James and A Marshall declared a personal interest in minute 243.

### **238. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews from Council, Executive Members and Non Executive Members**

None.

### **239. Forward Plan**

None.

**240. Corporate Plan, Hartlepool Partnership Plan and Departmental Plans 2011/12** *(Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Child and Adult Services and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

The Strategy and Performance Officer presented the proposed Corporate Plan, Hartlepool Partnership Plan and three Departmental Plans for 2011/12 for the Committee's consideration and comment, attached as appendices to the report.

During consideration of the plans, at the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, on 25 February 2011, a number of issues were raised, details of which were set out at Appendix A. Members were referred to the responses to the queries raised as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

The report included the timetable for approving the plans. In relation to the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan, Outcome 27 - Action – First draft of capital programme agreed by Strategic Capital Resources and Asset Programme Team (SCRAPT) to inform 2012/13 budget process – The Chair referred to the Committee's previous request that SCRAPT be renamed "The Council's Special Capital Reserve" and any decisions in this regard be made by full Council. The need to amend the plan and rename the Officer Working Group accordingly was emphasised.

**Recommended**

That Members comments on the draft Corporate Plan be noted and incorporated in the plans as appropriate.

**241. Quarter 3 - Corporate Plan and Revenue Financial Management Report 2010/11** *(Chief Finance Officer and Head of Performance and Partnerships)*

The Chief Finance Officer outlined the key issues from the Quarter 3 Corporate Plan and Revenue Financial Management Report 2010/11, which was submitted to Cabinet on 7 March 2011.

In response to a request for clarification, the Chief Finance Officer outlined the reasons for variances in the income projection figures. Members commented on the importance of continuous review to which the Chief Finance Officer indicated that the figures had been reviewed prior to the budget setting process and would continue to be reviewed.

**Recommended**

That the report be noted.



## **242. Quarter 3 – Capital and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring Report 2010/11**

The Chief Finance Officer outlined the key issues from the Quarter 3 Capital and Accountable Body Programme Monitoring report 2010/11, which was submitted to Cabinet on 7 March 2011 .

### **Recommended**

That the report be noted.

## **243. Provision of Face to Face Financial Advice and Information Services in Hartlepool – Evidence from the Department - Covering Report** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

As part of the Forum's investigation into the provision of face to face advice and information services in Hartlepool, a representative from the Child and Adult Services Department was in attendance at the meeting and provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which focussed on the following:-

- Face to face financial advice – licensed providers:-
  - West View Advice and Resource Centre
  - Manor Residents – Connected Care
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Tilley Bailey and Irvine Solicitors – limited free advice
- Navigators that offer initial support and signpost as appropriate include:-
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Jobsmart
  - Age Concern
  - Albert Centre
  - Benefits Team
  - Families Information Service
- Main providers delivery models:-
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
    - only offer on site appointments
    - outreach limited to Hartlepool Carers Group
  - West View Advice and Resource Centre
    - on site appointments
    - extensive outreach town wide
    - SLA with Housing Hartlepool for referred clients
  - Manor Residents – Connected Care
    - predominantly offering outreach in the south of the town
    - will provide support in other areas if requested

- Funding
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
    - Council funding – significant amount through community pool
    - other direct government grants and trusts
  - West View Advice and Resource Centre
    - Council funding – small amount through community pool
    - Sure Start – small amount of funding to deliver bespoke service at Sure Start Centres
    - Relies heavily on external funding
  - Manor Residents – Connected Care
    - Predominantly funded by PCT
    - Council funding through community pool
- **Implications of Current Economic Climate and Spending Cuts**
- All providers evidenced increased demand for financial advice and all have waiting lists
- Reduced Council funding available to support providers
- Reduced external grants and more organisations applying for help – funders are often oversubscribed
- Changes in welfare benefits likely to increase demand for support
- Organisations already working to capacity therefore needs to be more specific about the services required and to target funding available to have bigger impact
- Local demand in line with reported national debts

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Committee raised a number of comments/views/queries which included the following:-

- (i) In response to a query as to whether Turner Morgan Jamieson still provided legal advice via out reach centres, the Chair requested that clarification be provided in this regard following the meeting.
- (ii) A Resident Representative highlighted that Benefits advice had always been available town-wide and on-site appointments were available.
- (iii) During discussions regarding the various funding regimes available to the main providers, a Member questioned the level of funding allocated to the Citizens Advice Bureau from the Community Pool to which the Chair indicated that this issue would be explored as part of the call-in process.
- (iv) It was pointed out that Manor Residents/Connected Care did not receive funding from the community pool as indicated in the presentation slides.
- (v) Members commented on the need for the various providers to develop partnership working in terms of sharing expertise and delivery of services, the importance of providing generic information advice and guidance and that a consistent level of service be provided to all sectors of the community.

The Chair thanked the representative for her attendance and contribution to the investigation.

### **Recommended**

That the information given, be noted and discussions be used to assist the Forum in completing the scrutiny investigation

## **244. Final Report – Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services** *(Children's Services Scrutiny Forum)*

The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum moved the final report setting out the findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into "Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services"

### **Recommended**

That the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into "Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services" as set out below, be approved and forwarded to the Executive:-

- (a) The Council works with partner organisations / agencies to:
  - (i) identify families with additional needs as early as possible to ensure that individuals / families receive the help and support that meets their specific needs;
  - (ii) ensure that all services are co-ordinated to avoid gaps in service provision and duplication of services;
  - (iii) develop stronger partnership arrangements to ensure that all organisations / agencies are signposting individuals / families to the appropriate services; and
  - (iv) ensure that all services are open and accessible to all families and family members;
- (b) The Council develops and promotes a simplified self – referral route with one point of contact so that individuals / families can refer themselves to a service if needed;
- (c) The Council raises awareness of all the Think Family services available by promoting and marketing the services through the media; 'Hartbeat'; schools, nurseries and children's centres; GP surgeries; community centres and libraries;

- (d) The Council engages with parents and uses their experience to improve / deliver existing services and help develop new services;
- (e) The Council explores options with partner organisations / agencies to secure funding for the continuation of services and the development of new services;
- (f) The Council integrate the Think Family approach into community based services so that families feel comfortable, safe and secure when accessing the services; and
- (g) The Council, as part of the 2012 / 13 budget process re-examines the allocation of the Early Intervention Grant and the proportion that is allocated to Think Family services

## **245. Final Report – Youth Involvement/Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council services including the Safeguarding of Young People** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum moved the final report setting out the findings of the Young People's Representatives of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into "Youth Involvement/Participation in the Development and Delivery of Young People"

### **Recommended**

That the recommendations of the Young People's Representatives of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Youth Involvement/Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services including the Safeguarding of Young People" as set out below, be approved and forwarded to the Executive:-

That using Social Networking to promote council activities and/or engage young people is an excellent tool and the following recommendations will support doing this safely:-

- (a) Some clear policy and guidance put in place for all departments within the council to follow;
- (b) Have a standard procedure – departments should not go ahead and do this on their own;
- (c) Closed sites that can not be commented on or someone to be responsible for the site 24 hours a day. This would include fast and effective takedown procedures;

- (d) Employers should have basic legal training. If not don't do it!
- (e) Education is a good way of ensuring young people are safe when they are online. Ashleigh's rules go some way in to supporting this. This could be advertised when each department sets up a site;
- (f) Take into consideration examples of good practice. Some Councils may be ahead of others so link with them where possible;
- (g) Social networking is not for everyone so other methods of communicating such as posters and leaflets will still need to be in place.

**246. Operation of Directorship Model in Hartlepool – Guidance on Timetable for Consideration** *(Scrutiny Manager)*

Due to the timescales involved in considering this issue, it was suggested that this item be deferred and included in the work programme for the next municipal year.

**Recommended**

That this item be deferred for inclusion in the work programme for the next municipal year.

**247. Call-in Requests**

None

**248. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 7 April 2011 at 1.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm.

CHAIR



## SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

7 April 2011

**Report of:** Scrutiny Manager

**Subject:** CALL-IN OF DECISION: APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SPECIFICALLY THE DECISION TAKEN IN RELATION TO SEATON CAREW NURSERY SCHOOL) – BRIEFING NOTE

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the relevant information relating to the Call-In of the Seaton Nursery School element of the decision taken by Children's Services Portfolio Holder, on 22 February 2011, in relation to the appointment of local authority representatives to serve on school governing bodies.
- 1.2 Minute No. 27 – Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies
- “The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services approved the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representatives governors to serve on school Governing Bodies with the exception of the recommendation for **Seaton Carew Nursery School** and approved that **Councillor Hilary Thompson** be appointed to the **Governing Body of that nursery school**”
- 1.3 A full extract from the Decision Record is attached at **Appendix A**.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the decision making meeting of the Children's Services Portfolio Holder, on 22 February 2011, a report was considered in relation to the appointment of Local Authority representative's governors to serve on school governing bodies. A copy of the report is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 Following the decision taken by the Portfolio Holder, as outlined in Section 1.2 above, a Call-In Notice was submitted to the Proper Officer by 3 Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. A copy of this Call-in Notice is provided at **Appendix C**.

- 2.3 As the Call-In Notice met all the constitutional requirements, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, at its meeting on the 11 March 2011, gave consideration to the signatories view / opinion that the decision specifically relating to the Seaton Nursery School appointment had been taken in contravention of the principles of decision making (as outlined in Article 13 of the Constitution). The reason identified in the Call-In Notice being:-

iv) Respect for Human Rights and Equality;

The decision taken disregards the right of an elected member to represent their constituents.

vi) A Presumption in Favour of Openness;

The Portfolio Holder indicates that the reason for her decision was that Cllr Hilary Thompson had managed to foster a relationship with the nursery by attending meetings of the Governing Body as an Observer.

If this is the case it is not readily obvious from the minutes of the Governing Body for the Spring, Summer and Autumn Term meetings of 2010 which do not state that an observer was present.

The perception given is that the Portfolio Holder had either:

- Pre-determined the decision taken; or
- That the decision was politically motivated.

- 2.4 Having considered the content of the Call-In Notice, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee supported the need look closer at how the decision had been made and accepted the Call-In Notice.

- 2.5 It was also agreed that the Call-In would be retained by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for consideration in a practical and timely manner. In order to facilitate this, the Call-in is to be considered at today's Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

### 3. CALL-IN PROCESS – NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 In considering the Call-In, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is required in relation to the decision to, in the first instance, focus its discussions solely at the reasons outlined within the Call-In Notice.

- 3.2 To assist the Committee, and in accordance with the wishes of the Chair, extracts from the minutes of the Seaton Nursery Governing Body meetings (over the last 12 months) are attached at **Appendix D**. In addition to this, relevant officer(s) and the Children's Services Portfolio Holder will be in attendance at today's meeting to answer any questions felt to be appropriate.

- 3.3 Having fully discussed the reasons outlined within the Call-In Notice there are two ways forward:-
- (i) Should the Committee be satisfied that the principles of decision making have not been contravened, the decision will be effective immediately; or
  - (ii) Should the Committee remain concerned about the decision, comments should be agreed for consideration by the Portfolio Holder at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 Following the receipt of comments from Scrutiny, the Children's Services Portfolio Holder would be required to reconsider the decision in light of them and either reaffirm or amend the decision. A response from the Children's Services Portfolio Holder must be referred back to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, setting out the reasons for reaffirming or modifying the decision, in relation to the issues raised by the Committee.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That consideration be given to the whether the decision detailed in Section 1.2 was taken in accordance with the Principles of Decision Making (as outlined in Section 13 of the Constitution).
- 4.2 That should the Committee be of the view that the decision detailed in Section 1.2 of this report was not taken in accordance with the Principles of Decision Making, comments be formulated for consideration by the Children's Services Portfolio Holder.

**Contact Officer:-** Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 28 4142  
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Hartlepool Borough Council's Constitution;
- (ii) Call-In of Decision: Call-In of Decision: Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies – Briefing Note – Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (11 March 2011);
- (iii) Agenda and Minutes – Children's Services Portfolio Holder (22 February 2011); and
- (iv) Call-in Notice



## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

22 February 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Robbie Payne (Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Alan Dobby, Assistant Director, Resources and Support Services  
Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer  
Ian Merritt, Strategic Commissioner – Children's Services  
Penny Thompson, Childcare Market Officer  
Emma Marley, Special Educational Needs Manager  
John Robinson, Parent Commissioner  
Jill Coser, Parenting Co-ordinator  
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

### **27. Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies** *(Governor Support Officer)*

**Type of Decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of Report**

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies.

**Issues for Consideration**

The report summarised the process for inviting applications for representative governors and the criteria for their selection. A schedule of those schools with vacancies and those recommended for appointment by the General Purposes Committee. A number of appointments had been recommended for Catcote School, Greatham C of E Primary School, Rossmere Primary School and

West Park Primary School.

The Portfolio Holder commented that she spoken with the two Councillors who were interested in the vacancy at Seaton Carew and had decided not to go with the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee as the other Councillor had taken an interest in the school and had attended meetings of the Governing Body as an observer.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services approved the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representatives governors to serve on school Governing Bodies with the exception of the recommendation for Seaton Carew Nursery School and approved that Councillor Hilary Thompson be appointed to the Governing Body of that nursery school.

The meeting concluded at 10.57 am.

**P J DEVLIN**

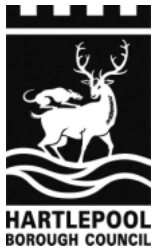
**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 25 February 2011**

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY  
REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL  
GOVERNING BODIES

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### **SUMMARY**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The report summarises the process for inviting applications for representative governors and the criteria for their selection.

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

It is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder to decide the appointment of Local Authority representative school governors following advice from the General Purposes Sub Committee.

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key decision.

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Portfolio Holder's meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011

#### **6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

Approval by the Portfolio Holder of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, in respect of the appointment of representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies.

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY  
REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL  
GOVERNING BODIES

---

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on school governing bodies.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

Applications are invited from members of the general public, elected members and those governors whose term of office is about to expire or have expired who are interested in serving or wish to continue serving as a Local Authority representative governor on school governing bodies.

The following criteria were agreed by the Borough Council for the recruitment of Local Education Authority representative governors in 2000. Local Authority governors should be able to show:

- demonstrable interest in and commitment to education;
- a desire to support the school concerned;
- a commitment to attend regular meetings of the governing body (and committees as appropriate) and school functions generally;
- good communication/interpersonal skills;
- ability to work as part of a team;
- a clearly expressed willingness to participate in the governor training programme.

A schedule setting out details of vacancies together with applications received in respect of the vacancies was considered by members of the General Purposes Sub Committee at their meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011. (**Appendix 1**).

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services approves the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on school Governing Bodies. A schedule outlining recommendations of the General Purposes Sub Committee is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **4. CONTACT OFFICER**

Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer, Telephone 523766  
Email [ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**VACANCIES FOR  
LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES  
ON GOVERNING BODIES**

**January 2011**

**Contact Officer: Ann Turner**  
**Telephone: 01429 523766**

**VACANCIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES**

<b>SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS</b>	<b>VACANCIES</b>	<b>POSSIBLE INTEREST</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENTS</b>
Barnard Grove Primary School Mr Michael Kay Councillor Rob Cook	One Vacancy	No interest expressed	No recommendation
Catcote School	Three Vacancies	Mr J. Bryant	Mr. J Bryant
Eldon Grove Primary School Mrs Jacqui Butterworth Mrs Patricia Vaughan	One Vacancy	No interest expressed	No recommendation
Grange Primary School Councillor R. Flintoff	One Vacancy	No interest expressed	No recommendation
Greatham C. E. Primary School Mrs P. Brotherton	One Vacancy	Councillor Geoff Lilley	Councillor Geoff Lilley
Rift House Primary School Mrs Sylvia Tempest	Two Vacancies	No interest expressed	No recommendation

SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS	VACANCIES	POSSIBLE INTEREST	RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENTS
Rossmere Primary School Mrs M. Smith	One Vacancy	Councillor Patricia Law ton Miss Nicola Marie Leighton	Councillor Patricia Law ton
Seaton Carew Nursery School Councillor Geoff Lilley	One Vacancy	Councillor Hilary Thompson Councillor Paul Malcolm Andrew Thompson	Councillor Paul M A Thompson
St Helen's Primary School Miss C. Lamb Councillor Reubin Atkinson Mr J. Ibbotson	One Vacancy	No interest expressed	No recommendation
Throston Primary School Mrs S. Allison Mr Kevin Shears	One Vacancy	Mrs Wendy Cooper	Mrs Cooper encouraged to apply for current Parent Governor vacancy at the school
West Park Primary School Mrs S. Kirby Mrs Margaret Boddy	One Vacancy	Councillor Ray Wells	Councillor Ray Wells



**Borough Council****Overview and Scrutiny – Call-in Notice – Scrutiny Chairs****1. Which decision would you like to call-in?**

(Please include details of the decision, when it was taken and by whom)

Minute 27. of the decision record of the Children's Services Portfolio of 22nd February

**2. What are the reasons for calling-in this decision?**

That the decision was not taken in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in Article 13 of the Constitution

**Principles of Decision Making****iv) respect for human rights and equality;**

The decision taken disregards the right of an elected members to represent their constituents.

**vi) a presumption in favour of openness;**

The Portfolio holder indicates that the reason for her decision was that Cllr. Hilary Thompson had managed to foster a relationship with the nursery by attending meetings of the Governing Body as an Observer.

If this is the case it is not readily obvious from the minutes of the Governing Body for the Spring, Summer and Autumn Term meetings of 2010 which do not state that an Observer was present.

The perception given is that the Portfolio Holder had either:  
pre-determined the decision to be taken;  
or that the decision was politically motivated;

Councillor	Position and Party Group	Signature
1. Marjorie James	Chair of S.C.C. - Labour	<i>MA James</i>
2. Carl Richardson	Member of S.C.C. - Labour	<i>Carl Richardson</i>
3. Ray Wells	Member of S.C.C. - Conservative	<i>Ray Wells</i>

**NB. Each of the Scrutiny Chairs may initiate call-ins providing they have the support of at least two members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. The three signatories must represent at least two of the Council's political groups.**

Councillor: Marjorie James

Signed: *MA James*

Date: 2nd March 2011

**For office use only**

## SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

7 April 2011



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

**Subject:** PROGRESS REPORT – COUNCIL ASSISTED SCHEME  
FOR THE PROVISION OF HOUSEHOLD WHITE  
GOODS/FURNITURE

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### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the work that has been undertaken since the meeting on 15 October 2010 with regards to research, and to outline the options for, and feasibility of, the introduction of a Council assisted scheme for the provision of household white goods/furniture.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As part of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's investigation into Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion, reference was made to the potential benefits of a scheme, which facilitates the provision of household white goods/furniture to families, particularly those in receipt of benefits. Following further discussion by the Committee, on the 23 July 2010, Members requested that a report exploring the feasibility of such a scheme be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.
- 2.2 This report considers various issues that need to be considered and explored before moving forward with a scheme in Hartlepool.
- 2.3 The principles for establishing a scheme include:
- Reduce stress and anxiety from having to find furniture (often of low quality);
  - Manage associated debts, to address poverty issues and reduce the debt spiral that can trap people. People on low incomes are often excluded from purchasing household white goods/furniture with often their only solution being to take on unsecured loans from lenders, potentially unlicensed, or sign up to schemes in weekly payment stores/catalogues, all charging high interest rates;
  - Increase length of tenancies, creating sustainable communities;
  - Improve satisfaction rates in relation to accommodation; and
  - Enhance the attraction of low demand properties.

### **3.0 RESEARCH INTO FURNITURE SCHEMES**

- 3.1 Furnished accommodation schemes have been expanding throughout Registered Providers (RP) and Local Authorities with retained housing stock. In order to inform this report research was undertaken into schemes, which operate across the country. The work undertaken so far, the research and the site visit (covered in section 4 of this report) have been endorsed by the Housing Partnership.

Some examples of established schemes that have been looked at in detail include:

- Rotherham Furniture Solutions; and
- Newcastle Furniture Services (NFS).

- 3.2 These two schemes and others like them across the country work in a similar way. They offer a furniture service to their tenants, with the aim of making it easier to set up home, by offering good quality affordable furnishings and household goods. It is very affordable to tenants, as the charge added to their rent for the goods is covered by Housing Benefit (if they qualify). Those who are not eligible would be required to pay the charges themselves.
- 3.3 These established schemes have, over time, adapted and expanded, and can act as the provider of furniture to other Registered Providers. For example, NFS provide their packs to organisations such as East Durham Homes, Home Group and Erimus Housing. In these circumstances NFS provide and deliver the furniture to the tenant and have the contract with the RP who therefore does not incur any upfront costs. However, the client (RP) is charged on a quarterly basis by NFS whether or not they have collected the furniture charge. The client is also charged for any damage or if the tenant leaves the property.
- 3.4 These types of schemes can be quite expensive once the RP has added their administrative cost on to the fee that the provider charges. Although (if eligible) the cost can be covered by Housing Benefit. This can also produce associated problems such as creating a benefit trap and become a disincentive for people to enter into employment.

### **4.0 VISIT TO ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- 4.1 A site visit to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was undertaken in January 2011. This was a meeting between Damien Wilson (Assistant Director Regeneration and Planning), Councillor Marjorie James and Karen Kelly (Housing Strategy Officer) with staff from Rotherham Furniture Solutions – James Greenhedge (Homes Services Manager), Lesley Gaunt (Homes Services Co-coordinator) and Andrew Roddison from Rotherfed (Tenants and Residents Federation).

- 4.2 The purpose of the visit was to obtain a history and overview of furnished homes and the Rotherham Furniture Solutions scheme. This involved looking at the staffing and service structure, finance and operational costs, service operations and procedures, alongside the outcomes for the customer. The show home was also visited.
- 4.3 Rotherham's original scheme ran from 2004 to 2009. It was established to assist people to set up home more quickly, to prevent tenancy failure and prevent homelessness and debt. At this time 1 bedroom flats and bungalows were in low demand and they also experienced a high abandonment rate. The scheme was set up with £240k funding (set as a loan) with 3 options of packages that were set based around the property size. They were also set as once a furnished tenancy, always a furnished tenancy in that property, according to their local Housing Benefit regulations.
- 4.4 Evaluations of this scheme identified that there were restrictions that worked against the principles it was established with:
- The financial burden of the tenancy always being furnished even though the tenant may replace items with their own;
  - Deterrent for people to come off housing benefit (i.e. to enter employment) when the full charge would be applicable to the tenant; and
  - Adverse effect on tenancy sustainability with tenants applying to leave to find unfurnished accommodation.
- 4.5 The existing scheme was therefore developed and transformed and had the aim to offer more choice and flexibility to meet individual needs and affordability, by incorporating the personalisation, worklessness and independent living themes.
- 4.6. As a result of research, Rotherham found similar schemes offering services that meet and are more responsive to customer need. This included set furniture pack options; wider choices of colour; wider range of choice in relation to the furniture items offered; opt out options within Housing Benefit rules (a dialog was established with the Housing Benefits Manager to discuss how the legislation could be interpreted to allow the scheme more flexibility); services delivered to other organisations; points systems; price branding and 'as good as new' furniture.
- 4.7 The new service has therefore been revised and re-launched in 2009, and is now based on the following principles:
- Simple – easy to understand scheme;
  - Choice – range of furniture options and items to meet individual needs;
  - Flexibility – options to switch, opt out, furniture swap to meet changing needs;
  - Sustainable – affordable and flexible to ensure tenants remain in their homes and the community;
  - Growth/Ambition – make service available to other organisations, provide move in and recycled furniture packs; and

- Invest – investment in initiatives and schemes to benefit the people of Rotherham.
- 4.8 More choice and flexibility is therefore offered with this revised scheme. The choice of items has been increased, tenants can increase or decrease the amount of furniture they require, and they do not have to have carpets or curtains.
- 4.9 Furniture pack options are now based on the number of items (i.e. Bronze is up to 3 items, Platinum is up to 14 items) and eligibility for the pack depends upon the property size. **The furniture pack options offered by Rotherham are outlined in Appendix 1.** The tenant selects items featured in the brochure or can visit the show room where carpet and curtain samples are also available.
- 4.10 If tenants move (i.e. into owner occupation) they can purchase the furniture at a depreciative rate. Only carpets, if they have been selected, have to remain in the property under the new scheme. In such circumstances the property would have to be re-let stating the rent plus the carpet service charge would be applicable.
- 4.11 As a financial safeguard the furnished charge is for a minimum of 2 years. After 2 years the tenant has the option to:
- Continue to participate within the scheme (furniture and charge will remain in place);
  - Return all the furnished items, the charge will be removed and the tenancy made unfurnished; or
  - Sign a new tenancy agreement and purchase the furniture at the depreciative value.
- 4.12 The advantages of this type of scheme for Hartlepool include:
- Easy access to good quality furniture;
  - Reduction in the anxiety, stress and worry of setting up home;
  - Rebuild confidence when turning the shell of a property into a home;
  - Help avoid the risk of debt often linked to Child Poverty;
  - Reduce financial exclusion;
  - Choice from a range of furnished items to suit individuals' needs;
  - Help to support sustainable communities by addressing high turnover and poverty issues, as there is less chance of a tenancy failing if people have furniture, carpets, decoration in place – tenants have a stake in where they live;
  - Assist vulnerable people e.g. young, single people find it difficult to set up a tenancy; and
  - Tenants would receive new or nearly new furniture.

#### 4.13 Disadvantages may include:

- Could potentially create a benefit trap;
- Risk for Registered Provider if tenants abandon leaving damaged furniture or steal furniture;
- Housing Benefit reforms might impact on the success of this scheme;
- The impact of flexible tenancies has not yet been realised;
- The furniture does not belong to the tenant; and
- At what point has the customer paid back more in 'rent' than they could have bought the furniture for?

### 5.0 ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES

5.1 In addition to the type of scheme offered by Rotherham there are also schemes which operate for people regardless of tenure that the Council, Housing Hartlepool and other Registered Providers can signpost people to. These schemes however are for household white goods only.

#### 5.2 Five Lamps Scheme

Five Lamps is a charity based in Thornaby, but covers a wide geographical area including Hartlepool. One of their schemes is to provide loans to people who are financially excluded, with no access to finance to purchase household items. The main demand and provision is of white goods to people, supplied and delivered directly from Your Homes Newcastle (YHN).

5.3 The rates of Five Lamps are very low, for example, on a £300 loan a customer would only pay back £21 interest over a 26 week period.

#### 5.4 Co-Op Scheme

The Co-Op offer a similar scheme to the one outlined above. Families on low incomes can buy household electrical goods such as washing machines and cookers.

5.5 The Co-Op's electrical appliances arm has teamed up with credit unions to come up with the initiative, which offers families on low incomes the opportunity to buy competitively priced appliances, through an affordable loan from their credit union.

5.6 The advantages of these types of schemes include:

- Direct scheme between Five Lamps and Your Homes Newcastle (or Co-Op) and therefore no risk to the Council;
- The Council, via the Housing Options Centre, can signpost potential customers to the scheme;
- Five Lamps and Co-Op (or their credit union) take all the risk on loan repayments;
- The white goods belong to the customer; and

- Low cost loans are provided, which avoids the risk of individuals taking on high interest, unsecured loans from lenders, potentially unlicensed, or sign up to schemes in retail weekly payment stores or catalogues.

5.7 The disadvantages of such a scheme are:

- Would have a low impact on sustaining tenancies (especially for vulnerable people), reducing Child Poverty and reducing financial exclusion; and
- It is the provision of household white goods only.

## 6.0 DELIVERING A SCHEME IN HARTLEPOOL

6.1 From the research that has been undertaken, two schemes with potential to operate in Hartlepool have been worked up for the provision of household white goods/furniture – these are explored in sections 7 and 8 of this report. In addition, signposting individuals to the Five Lamps or Co-op schemes should also be a consideration for those who do not need or want access to a furniture scheme, but need assistance with purchasing white goods.

## 7.0 SCHEME 1: HOUSING HARTLEPOOL

7.1 The first strand is to develop a partnership with Housing Hartlepool as the main provider of social housing within Hartlepool. This would be a 'rental' scheme for their tenants.

7.2 Since 2005 Housing Hartlepool have operated a furnished lettings scheme which took over from the one that the Council had previously operated for Asylum Seekers and to meet the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

7.3 This was originally established with 40 new furnished tenancies at a cost of £120,000 and was introduced to meet the needs within the community, to support the objectives within the Homelessness Strategy and mitigate the risk of tenancy failure.

7.4 In April 2008 a report was taken to their Board to extend the furnishing scheme to 150 offering a more flexible service. However, due to a financial risk assessment this was put on hold.

7.5 The current scheme therefore provides 46 fully furnished and 1 part furnished property (45 flats, 2 bungalows). The average cost to fully furnish each property is £3000 and it is currently provided by The Furnishing Service.

7.6 The service charge for 2010/11 is £27.57 per week and is eligible for housing benefit.

- 7.7 An analysis has been undertaken in relation to the current tenants. 72% are in receipt of full housing benefit, 17% pay part of the charge, 9% pay the full costs and 2% receive support from Housing Hartlepool to cover the cost.
- 7.8 The tenancies has proved to be generally sustainable. 34% of the current tenants have been in their properties for less than 12 months, 23% have been there between 1 and 2 years, 23% between 2 and 5 years and 19% for over 5 years.
- 7.9 The rehousing needs of the current tenants were:
- Leaving supported accommodation 19%
  - Homeless 11%
  - Drug Issues 4%
  - Drug/Offending Issues 4%
  - Mental Health Issues 34%
  - Alcohol Issues 9%
  - No needs (allocated via CBL) 19%
- 7.10 A number of issues have been identified with the current scheme:
- Inflexible due to Housing Benefit implications
  - Tenants can only access a full package
  - Disincentive to work as the furnishing costs are perceived as too high
  - Some of the furnished properties are based in low demand areas and with the higher rents are proving difficult to let
- 7.11 In December 2010 Housing Hartlepool and Tristar Homes (Stockton) announced their new group structure under Vela Homes.
- 7.12 The two organisations will retain their distinct identities and continue to operate as separate landlords. However, the new group structure offers the potential for substantial benefits including greater buying powers leading to better value for money for tenants.
- 7.13 The group structure also means the organisations can bring together their expertise and share best practice which will mean even better services for tenants within Hartlepool and Stockton.
- 7.14 Tristar Homes currently have 188 furnished tenancies and offer a flexible scheme with different packages supplied by The Furnishing Resource Centre based in Liverpool. The packages provide basic furniture and carpets and the cost varies according to the size of the property. The service charge can also be covered by Housing Benefit if the tenant is eligible. Tristar also offer tenants 6 months free furnishings if they enter employment.
- 7.15 Housing Hartlepool has recently agreed in principle to join Tristar's Scheme.
- 7.16 Although the management and finer details of this scheme for Housing Hartlepool have yet to be developed the Council via the Housing Options



Centre will be able to assist in promoting and signposting clients to this service.

## **8.0 SCHEME 2: COMMUNITY/ VOLUNTARY SECTOR ENTERPRISE OR COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY**

- 8.1 The Coalition Government's 'Big Society' sees a major opportunity for re-use organisations to deliver more services with both the public and private sector, with the community/voluntary sector who form the fabric of so much of everyday life being bigger and stronger than ever before, and is one of the ways the sector can establish a 'pioneering service', and bring wider benefits to their communities.
- 8.2 The second strand is to develop and support a scheme with a locally based community/voluntary sector enterprise or a Community Interest Company (CIC) that would be mainly targeted at people in private rented accommodation and owner occupiers.
- 8.3 Although a scheme "for the provision of household white goods/furniture to families" was the initial focus for exploration, following the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's investigation into Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion, it is proposed that further work is undertaken to establish who the target audience might be for a council assisted scheme, and who would initially be the 'priority customers'. Existing research, looking at similar schemes currently in operation has found that young, single people buy into whole packages, whereas families have a tendency to access part-furnished schemes.
- 8.4 Following local market testing, to understand in more detail the demand for a scheme of this kind, the type and quality of furniture people want, which particular items there would be most call for etc., it is possible that the scheme would be worked up that has two strands: (i) the provision of new furniture packs, based loosely on the Rotherham model and (ii) the opportunity to purchase second hand furniture through a furniture recycling project.
- 8.5 Within the scheme, led by a community/voluntary sector enterprise or a CIC, it is recognised that the customer will need to pay the charges themselves for the furniture, whether it is a new furniture pack or second hand items, as the customers will not be eligible for the payments to be covered by Housing Benefit. Customers will need to source the required finance, independently, from a regulated body. This would be a specific stipulation of the scheme to minimise the risk of individuals accessing finance from unlicensed lenders.
- 8.6 The benefits of such a scheme echo the points highlighted in paragraph 4.12, but will also:
- Encourage investment, as any income and profits are retained and invested in the community/voluntary sector and ultimately the local economy;

- Opportunity to help sustain a local community/voluntary sector organisation;
- Provide social benefits for local people including work and training/apprenticeship opportunities;
- The collection of the repayments on the loan, where applicable, will lie with the independent providers and not the enterprise or CIC; and
- It will be an independent service available to all regardless of tenure.

More specifically, with an arm of the scheme focussed on a furniture recycling project it will:

- Assist the Council with meeting household waste recycling targets;
- Reduce incidents of fly tipping;
- Reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions;
- Furniture belongs to the customer and is owned outright; and
- Volunteer and training/apprenticeship opportunities made available in restoring recycled furniture.

8.7 The disadvantage identified to date is:

- The customer has to pay upfront and in full to the enterprise or CIC.
- Wider disadvantages, with an arm of the scheme focussed on recycled furniture include:
- Potential impacts on existing charity shops who rely on the sales from second hand furniture items that are often acquired through a free collection service.

8.8 There are a number of considerations, which also need to be worked through in the preparation of a Business Case (outlined in the bullet points below). This will be prior to piloting a scheme that will test suppliers, demand, the effectiveness of processes and the sustainability of such a scheme in the long-term. Potential links to the Council's Bulky Waste service also need to be considered, as an opportunity to work in partnership with the Council is currently being advertised, which could see a local community re-use organisation utilise the reusable items of furniture collected via the Council's Bulky Waste scheme.

Considerations:

- Financial forecasting to ensure the scheme is sustainable;
- How the market testing will be undertaken - through surveying applicants on the housing register?;
- Ensuring furniture packages available are affordable;
- Establishing risks and set procedures to minimise or overcome them e.g. quality control measures and appropriate insurances for damage, theft etc.; and
- Engaging a provider who offers low cost personal loans, as a potential partner in the scheme, and establishing what the possibilities are with regard to what direct finance is available to the scheme for the customer to access.

- 8.9 Case studies outlining different customer scenarios are attached as **Appendix 2**.

## **9.0 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 9.1 The Council has identified capital money to finance a scheme, to assist the development of a white goods/furniture scheme within existing resources.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the report outlining the work undertaken to date;
- (ii) Note the model Housing Hartlepool is proposing for their tenants; and
- (iii) Agree a way forward through facilitating an independent discussion regarding the proposal to develop and support a scheme with a community/voluntary sector enterprise/CIC and, determine any further considerations that need to be taken into account through the Business Planning process.

## **11.0 CONTACT OFFICER:-**

Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)  
Regeneration and Planning  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council

Tel: 01429 523400

Email: [damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## **12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Minutes from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meetings (23 July and 15 October 2010); and
- (ii) Report of Andy Powell, Director of Housing Services at Housing Hartlepool (November 2010).

## APPENDIX 1 – FURNITURE PACK OPTIONS FOR ROTHERHAM FURNITURE SOLUTIONS

Furniture Bands (basic)		Bronze up to 3 items	Silver up to 5 items	Gold up to 9 items	Platinum up to 14 items
Weekly Payment		£9.68	£15.29	£24.74	£34.91

Furniture Bands (with plus range items)	Individual Items (in the plus range)	Bronze up to 3 items	Silver up to 5 items	Gold up to 9 items	Platinum up to 14 items
Curtains	£3.28	£12.96	£18.57	£28.02	£38.19
Carpets	£10.43	£20.11	£25.72	£35.17	£45.34
Carpets and Curtains	£13.71	£23.39	£29.00	£38.45	£48.62

Property Size Eligibility		Bronze up to 3 items	Silver up to 5 items	Gold up to 9 items	Platinum up to 14 items
1 Bed Property		✓	✓	X	X
2 Bed Property		✓	✓	✓	X
3 Bed Property		✓	✓	✓	✓
4+ Bed Property		✓	✓	✓	✓

**Furnished items available:** 2 seat sofa, armchair, dining table and chairs, coffee table, bean chair, rug selection, electric cooker, fridge, fridge/freezer, microwave, washing machine, tumble dryer, wardrobe, chest of drawers, single bed, double bed. Customers also have the option of choosing curtains and/or carpets to add to their pack for an additional charge. Customers can also just opt for just the curtains and/or the carpets and will be charged the weekly amount accordingly (see above).

PROVIDED BY ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**APPENDIX 2 – CASE STUDIES****Case Study 1**

Customer A, an unemployed administrative worker, recently moved into a 2 bedroom house in the private rented sector in Hartlepool. Customer A approached the enterprise/CIC to enquire about the options in relation to signing up to the furniture scheme, which he had seen publicised in Hartbeat.

Customer A does not have any savings to pay for a furniture pack up front and therefore asked what finance arrangements were available. The enterprise/CIC worked with Customer A to establish what his requirements were, and to determine the most appropriate furniture package to best meet Customer A's needs. The enterprise/CIC then referred Customer A to partners in the regulated financial services sector who could provide personal loans at low interest rates. Customer A returned to the enterprise/CIC with confirmation of a personal loan he had been eligible for. This covered the cost of a bronze furniture package, which the enterprise/CIC ordered, delivered and installed.

At the end of the term, Customer A decided to return the items to the scheme. An assessment of the items was carried out by the enterprise/CIC to establish their condition. The necessary repairs and cleaning were undertaken, to bring the items up to standard, which were then re-sold via the second hand furniture service.

**Case Study 2**

Customer B, a self employed tradesperson, recently bought a 3 bedroom house in Hartlepool. Customer B paid £95k for the property, but secured a mortgage for £100k. Customer B approached the enterprise/CIC to enquire about options in relation to furnishing his new home, which he had seen advertised in the Estate Agents.

The enterprise/CIC worked with Customer B to establish what his requirements were and to establish the most appropriate furniture package to best meet Customer B's needs. With the additional money on Customer B's mortgage he was able to purchase the furniture pack up front, which the enterprise/CIC ordered, delivered and installed.

At the end of the term, Customer B decided to look into purchasing the items at the depreciative value. The enterprise/CIC calculated the value of the items to determine how much Customer B was required to pay, to purchase the items outright.

**Case Study 3**

Customer C, an employed nursery nurse, recently moved into a 2 bedroom house in the private rented sector in Hartlepool. Customer C approached the enterprise/CIC to enquire about the options in relation to acquiring furniture for her new home, after being informed of the scheme through the Housing Options Centre. Customer C had £250 of savings to purchase the furniture she required. The enterprise/CIC referred Customer C to the second hand furniture service where she was able to purchase the items outright. The enterprise/CIC then delivered and installed the items of furniture for Customer C.

## SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

7 April 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Manager

**Subject:** ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED DURING  
CONSIDERATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES  
DEPARTMENTAL PLAN

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the additional information requested during consideration of the Chief Executives Departmental Plan,

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on the 25 February 2011, considered in detail the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan. During consideration of the plan, the Committee identified a number of question to which they required a formal response.
- 2.2 The required responses have now been compiled by the Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer and are outlined in **Appendix A** for Members information.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee receives and notes the information provided.

**Contact Officer:-** Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 28 4142  
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee – 25 February 2011 - Minutes and Report entitled Proposals for inclusion in the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2011/12 – *Assistant Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Solicitor and Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer*

**Response(s) to Questions Raised by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee -  
25 Feb 2011**

**Financial Inclusion**

Addressing financial and social exclusion has a national profile and is a local priority within Hartlepool. As part of the Council's Public Service Agreement covering the period April 2006 to March 2009 a workstream focussing on maximising entitlements to reductions in council tax and thereby maximising financial resources in households was adopted. This workstream together with other financial inclusion activities undertaken as part of the New Deal for Communities programme laid the foundations for the joint stakeholder Hartlepool BC / Working Neighbourhoods Fund project on Improving Financial Inclusion to run from April 2009 to March 2011. The project funded a post to work alongside a worker funded by Hartlepool BC to provide a strategic, co-ordinated response to tackling financial inclusion.

The WNF funded worker has:

- supported the development of the Credit Union to service the financial needs of families in difficulty.
- fostered the development of an effective multi agency Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership.
- supported successful bids for funding from the People's Millions and the McMillan Trust to develop outreach financial advice provision.
- increased general political awareness / understanding of financial inclusion and linkages to Child Poverty.
- improved financial awareness across education and the disadvantaged community sectors.
- delivered with partners a series of Money Matters roadshow events.
- piloted financial advice and awareness through the mobile library service.
- delivered a Money Skills event within Hartlepool College of FE.

An external interim evaluation of the WNF Financial Inclusion project in 2010 was positive.

The former Finance Division embraced fully the Financial Inclusion agenda and as part of a managed budget under spends a reserve was earmarked to fund Financial Inclusion initiatives. It is this earmarked reserve that will be released to continue fund the cost of the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Development Officer for a further 12 months until March 2012

For 2011/12 a shift in focus on financial inclusion has been defined centred on developing referral channels for those seeking financial support from the DWP into advice agencies in particular West View Advice and Resource Centre and also the Hartlepool Credit Union to steer people away from door step lenders. The Hartlepool Financial Inclusion officer will continue to support the development of the Hartlepool Credit Union, the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership, develop financial capability amongst college sector students and will deliver a range of money skills events within the community building on the positive work to date.

### **Benefits Performance**

The Benefits Service in recent years has dealt with increased numbers of enquiries and claims in response to the national economic situation.

The benefit caseload of housing and council tax benefit claims in pay has increased by 13% from 13,659 in 2007/8 to 15,469 in 2010/1. In addition to the increase in claims that resulted in an award of benefit there has been large numbers of claims that were unsuccessful but have required staff work to establish a nil entitlement position.

Against this background of increasing demand for assistance from the public, performance in speed of processing new claims has continued to improve and the speed of processing of changes in circumstances work is being sustained at a high standard. Full details are shown in the table below:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Average days to process New Claims</b>	<b>Average days to process Changes in Circumstances</b>
	Days	Days
2007/8	25.1	7.4
2008/9	25.7	9.1
2009/10	24.3	9.0
2010/11	20.9 est	9.0 est

Since the 2009/10 budgets were agreed, over £400,000 of savings have been delivered from the Revenues and Benefits budgets. The challenge moving forward is for the service to sustain the current high standards of service within the reduced resources and that is the primary reason surrounding the performance targets set for 2011/12.

### **Invoice Payment Targets**

The definition of the 30 days payment target is based upon the former Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 8). This, measures the proportion of undisputed supplier invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt of the invoice by the Council. In addition, the Council operates a pledge to pay undisputed local (Hartlepool based) suppliers within 10 calendar days of receipt of the invoice to assist with their cash flow in the current difficult economic climate.



## SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

7 April 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Manager

Subject: REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE  
SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE COMMUNITY  
POOL (CALL IN) WORKING GROUP

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for a request for funding from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Community Pool (Call In) Working Group from within the Overview and Scrutiny Function's dedicated scrutiny budget.

### 2. FUNDING PROPOSAL

- 2.1 In line with Council procedures, the agreed pro-forma has been completed and is attached as **Appendix A**. The purpose of the completed pro-forma is to assist this Committee in determining whether approval should be given to fund the additional support requested by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (Call In) Working Group.

### 3. THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

- 3.1 The Financial Procedure Rules are those rules that the Council must have to govern its financial affairs. These rules are required by law to ensure that large sums of public money are spent properly and wisely.
- 3.2 The Financial Procedure Rules together with Standing Orders, apply to all parts of the Council, to Elected Members and employees and form an integral part of the Council's Constitution.
- 3.3 Consequently, whilst this Committee is requested to make a decision on the merits of the request for funding, the Committee must also adhere to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee:-

- (a) determines whether the proposal is justified on the basis of information provided in **Appendix A**;
- (b) determines whether the proposal is a sufficient priority within the remaining budgetary provision; and
- (c) agrees in principal that any funding allocated, is in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

**Contact:-** Joan Stevens – Scrutiny Manager  
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523 087  
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

APPENDIX A

**PRO-FORMA TO REQUEST FUNDING TO SUPPORT  
CURRENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

**Title of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

**Title of the current scrutiny investigation for which funding is requested:**

**To clearly identify the purpose for which additional support is required:**

**To outline indicative costs to be incurred as a result of the additional support:**

**To outline any associated timescale implications:**

**To outline the ‘added value’ that may be achieved by utilising the additional support as part of the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:**

**To outline any requirements / processes to be adhered to in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules / Standing Orders:**

**To outline the possible disadvantages of not utilising the additional support during the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:**

**To outline any possible alternative means of additional support outside of this proposal:**

## APPENDIX A

**PRO-FORMA TO REQUEST FUNDING TO SUPPORT  
CURRENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

<b>Title of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b> SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
<b>Title of the current scrutiny investigation for which funding is requested:</b> SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (CALL IN) WORKING GROUP
<b>To clearly identify the purpose for which additional support is required:</b>  Lunch for Members
<b>To outline indicative costs to be incurred as a result of the additional support:</b>  4 Members @ £3.50 per head, £14.00 in total
<b>To outline any associated timescale implications:</b>  None identified.
<b>To outline the 'added value' that may be achieved by utilising the additional support as part of the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:</b> To enable Members to participate given the short timescales involved in the call in and the proximity of the working group to the afternoons meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.
<b>To outline any requirements / processes to be adhered to in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules / Standing Orders:</b>  N/A
<b>To outline the possible disadvantages of not utilising the additional support during the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:</b>  N/A
<b>To outline any possible alternative means of additional support outside of this proposal:</b>  None identified.

