

REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

13 May 2011

The meeting commenced at 4.15 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development)

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

53. Tees Valley Enterprise Arcade *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the progress of the Tees Valley Enterprise Arcade Project which Hartlepool Borough Council is managing on behalf of the Tees Valley Industrial Programme (TVIP) Enterprise Stream.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Tees Valley Enterprise Arcade was approved as part of the Enterprise Theme of Tees Valley Industrial Programme following the closure of the Corus plant in Redcar. £60 million had been invested into the Tees Valley economy by the Government in 2009 including support for new start businesses. Theme groups were developed to consider proposals for funding including the creation of an Enterprise Arcade Project whereby individuals could test trade a retail business. This project was subsequently agreed and is managed by the Council due to its Indoor Market project experience. Middlesbrough, Redcar and Stockton on Tees now have arcades in operation and the project team supporting them was also fully in place. Details were given of the individual traders at each arcade along with information on evaluation and projected outputs. There was no direct

revenue cost to the Council and by leading on the project Hartlepool would be in a strong position to work with sub regional partners on future Tees Valley projects.

The Portfolio Holder asked that when the final evaluation of the project was brought to her Portfolio that the project co-ordinator be in attendance if possible. She felt that Hartlepool being asked to lead on this initiative for neighbouring authorities was a credit to the team and a demonstration of how you can build on success. She queried whether the recent budget cuts were expected to have an impact and was advised that the projected outputs as detailed in the report were all on target. The Portfolio Holder felt that the Council's innovation and proven expertise in this area could be offered to other areas as a potential source of income.

Decision

That the report be noted and a final evaluation report be received upon completion of the project.

54. Hartlepool Enterprise Centre *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To provide information on the operation of Hartlepool Enterprise Centre together with information about the various services provided from the Centre to the wider business community.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Hartlepool Enterprise Centre was converted into a managed workspace in 1992 with further refurbishment being carried out in 2007. The Centre hosts a mix of small businesses and wraparound services for the tenants such as administration services, meeting facilities and a gym. Staff based at the centre also run various other projects on behalf of Economic Development and work for external organisations as a means of income generation. The projects include leading on the Hartlepool Business Incubation System, the management of Newburn Bridge Industrial Estate, "Buy Local" and Tees Valley Enterprise Arcade. Further details of these external projects were given within the report.

Rents for the centre increase 2 years from initial occupation and are reviewed annually thereafter. The aim was for rent after the initial 2 year occupancy to be higher than corresponding rents in more commercial premises thereby encouraging businesses to move on, leaving room for

newer businesses to become established. The bistro area is currently operated by an external business as a free tenancy on a breakeven basis. However this contract is due to end in February 2012. The Portfolio Holder suggested that the Council's in-house catering could take over the bistro at that time, albeit that they might need to be more responsive to the consumer needs and possibly introduce changes to their repertoire to reflect the different client base in the HEC. She also highlighted this service as an excellent training opportunity for young people.

The Portfolio Holder queried what impact the recent budget cuts would have on the centre. The Economic Development Manager felt there would be some impact around the margins but key core activity would remain unaffected. The Portfolio Holder felt Buy Local could be an income generating opportunity and should be considered further. The Economic Development Manager advised that all Council websites were being rationalised and that would include Buy Local. The Portfolio Holder indicated she wished to see a site map of the websites.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the anticipated review of centre rents and the grants available through Economic Development. The Economic Development Manager advised that the rent review was being carried out in line with current Council policy and was not expected to bring up any large scale changes. Officers would be able to advise the Portfolio Holder on the financial assistance provided by Economic Development grants in June. Business Modernisation grants were also available however the loss of Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) monies meant that attempts were being made to reduce any grant applications to the minimum amount required.

The Portfolio Holder requested updates on the development of business support provision in light of the Coalition Government's emerging policies in this area.. The Economic Development Officer confirmed that business support activities have been negatively impacted on by the loss of WNF funding, something which was having an impact on many organisations. The Portfolio Holder also referred to the Incubation Project Crown Buildings and was informed that a feasibility study on this was underway. The Portfolio Holder suggested that Officers look at similar work being carried out in Bristol.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.55 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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