

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

6 June 2011

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

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Jonathan Brash, Performance Portfolio Holder
Robbie Payne, Deputy Mayor, Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder
Pamela Hargreaves, Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Gerard Hall, Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder
Cath Hill, Children's Services Portfolio Holder
Hilary Thompson, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder

Also Present:

Councillor Marjorie James and Chris Simmons

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Chris Little, Chief Finance Officer
Alyson Caman, Legal Services Manager
Nicola Bailey, Director of Child and Adult Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources
Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager
Catherine Frank, Local Strategic Partnership Manager
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Jackson, Cabinet Member without Portfolio.

2. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

3. Minutes

- (i) Cabinet – 23 May 2011 – Received.
- (ii) Emergency Planning Joint Committee – 20 May 2011 – Received.

4. Final 2010/2011 Outturn Strategy (*Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable Members to finalise the 2010/2011 Outturn Strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Procurement presented a report to enable Cabinet to finalise the 2010/2011 outturn strategy. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that this report had been submitted to the previous meeting of Cabinet and was resubmitted along with additional information attached by way of appendix detailing departmental contributions for reserves from underspends and incomes.

A lengthy discussion took place during which some Members suggested that the £89,000 proposed to transfer to the general fund balances should be utilised to support services cut or reduced as part of the budget proposals for 2011/12. In addition, a Member highlighted the difficulties being faced by residents in rural communities since the withdrawal of public transport for rural areas, in particular the elderly and vulnerable people. It was noted that there appeared to be nowhere else within the town without any public transport service provision. Members were reminded that a Working Group of Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy had been created to examine the issue of public transport and had circulated questionnaires to all signatories of the petition received on this subject which was predominantly residents from Dalton, Elwick and Greatham. The responses received did not support the position that the bus services provided in the rural areas were well used, although it was acknowledged that there were individual cases of elderly and vulnerable residents that would require further consideration. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy confirmed that the recommendations from the Working Group would be shared with the ward councillor for the rural areas.

Whilst the above concerns were acknowledged, it was noted that consideration of the outturn strategy enabled Members to begin the process

of closing the Council's accounts and was an opportunity to re-visit the difficult decisions taken during the consideration of the budget proposals for 2011/12. Members were reminded that the removal of public transport was not a Council decision and was in fact the result of a decision taken by local transport providers to withdraw the services.

A Member commented that he felt that sufficient consultation with Members had not taken place in relation to the proposed contributions to reserves and suggested several areas where any uncommitted underspends should be utilised. It was highlighted that due to good financial management, there had been resources remaining within reserves that could be utilised to protect services that may come under pressure next year. However, it was confirmed that a full review of all budget reserves would be undertaken next year to ascertain whether they were still required as reserves and if so what they would be spent on.

It was suggested by a Member that a further report be submitted to Cabinet in six months' time to update Members on the position in relation to the 2010/11 reserves and what had been spent or not and whether there was an expectation that it would be. This would be an important part of the process to ensure that should any funding not be utilised, a further debate can take place on reallocating that funding.

During the discussions it was acknowledged that despite the difficult budgetary situation currently faced by the Council, the funding of adult social care had become a major debate and Cabinet and Council were looking to prioritise these services for vulnerable people in the future and continue with effective monitoring of the commissioning of these services.

The Portfolio Holders for Performance and Procurement and Culture, Leisure and Tourism wished it to be noted that they did not support the recommendations.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) The Specific Reserves detailed in Appendix A and the following proposed contributions of Budget Support Fund - £0.161m and Strategic Risk Reserve - £0.874 were approved.
- (iii) The transfer of £89,000 to General Fund Reserves was approved.

5. Review of Community Involvement and Engagement (including LSP review) *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applied.

Purpose of report

The report sought agreement on the future approach of the Local Authority to community and stakeholder involvement and engagement and the Local Strategic Partnership, including theme partnerships.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented a report which set out a series of proposals which, if agreed, would change the Council's approach to community engagement and involvement including through the Local Strategic Partnership. It included proposals for the development of a Strategic Partners Group and Face the Public events as well as changes to the current arrangements for theme groups, Neighbourhood Consultative Forums, Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) and resident representation. The report also included proposals to end a number of current arrangements. Officers were thanked for their hard work and commitment in progressing this review which Members fully supported.

Members welcomed the review and subsequent proposals and were encouraged by the move towards the introduction of Neighbourhood Voices as resident representation across the new ward boundaries. The distinction between the role of Ward Councillors and residents was discussed and there was support for the change in terminology from representative to voice to reflect this distinction. However, whether one Neighbourhood Voice representative per ward would be sufficient was questioned as the new ward boundaries increased some of the ward sizes significantly. In addition, the requirement for Neighbourhood Voice representatives to be part of a residents' association or community group was discussed and there was concern that this requirement may preclude some very passionate, residents who are genuinely interested in their community and neighbourhood from becoming a Neighbourhood Voice representative.

A Member referred to the Tees Valley Rural Forum and reported concerns expressed by Parish Council representatives at the disbanding of the Parish Liaison Meetings. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the Parish Liaison Meetings had not been as well attended as they could have been and it was hoped that the Tees Valley Rural Forum would provide a more effective mechanism for engagement with parish communities.

A Member questioned where the responsibilities of the disbanded themed groups would fall. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the remaining four themed groups would be broad enough to capture all current policy responsibilities whilst ensuring that the mechanism to engage with the public on those issues continued. Members were reminded that the Face the Public events would also create opportunities to discuss neighbourhood issues. In relation to the themed groups, it was

suggested that they should be chaired by the relevant portfolio holder. For the membership of the Strategic Partners Group support was given to option 2 along with option A which would include the Mayor, Cabinet and Chief Executive as representatives of Hartlepool Borough Council.

A Member raised concern about the refocus of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) on the 5% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods as it was felt that they provided valuable forums and were more important than they used to be.

The Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee was in attendance and questioned the level of consultation undertaken with the wider Council Members. It was suggested that this recommendations of the review be referred to the Council Working Group to enable all Members to debate and comment on the proposals. It was noted that in order to progress the review in a timely manner, the views of the Council Working Group should be sought on the proposals outlined in the report and submitted to Cabinet in four weeks' time.

Decision

That the report be submitted to a meeting of the Council Working Group to seek the views of all Members and be reported back to Cabinet in four weeks' time.

6. Enterprise Zones *(Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Coalition Government's emerging policy on enterprise zones and for Cabinet to endorse the proposed areas in Hartlepool that would be put forward to Government as part of a Tees Valley wide proposal and to endorse the overall strategic approach for Tees Valley.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented a report which detailed the emerging enterprise zone policy, the proposed sites that Hartlepool would put forward for consideration by Government to grant enterprise zone status and details of the Tees Valley strategic approach to the emerging enterprise zone policy. Members were asked to note that the Tees Valley approach was extremely

positive and was leading the way nationally and generating a lot of business interest in the area. Further reports would be submitted once the Government had determined the scope and size of Enterprise Zones.

Decision

- (i) The overall Tees Valley strategic approach was endorsed.
- (ii) The sites that Hartlepool had initially nominated for enterprise zone status were endorsed.
- (iii) That Cabinet receive further reports once the Government had determined the scope and size of Enterprise Zones.

7. Housing Market Renewal Programme – Raby Road Corridor *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

To update the Cabinet on the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme in relation to the Raby Road Corridor site which comprises land at Perth, Hurworth, Gray Streets, Turnbull Street (Nos. 47 to 68), The West Hartlepool Rovers Amateur Quois Club Grainger Street, Grainger Street (Nos. 1-21, Raby Road (Nos. 144 to 166 (even)) and 40 Brougham Terrace (the Order Lands).

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented a report which provided an update of progress in relation to the Raby Road Corridor regeneration area as part of Hartlepool's incremental programme of Housing Market Renewal. The report included background information in relation to previous decisions taken by Cabinet, the present position regarding the Compulsory Purchase Order including the decision by the Secretary of State and details of the Inspector's findings at Public Inquiry and update on the developer selection process. It was noted that the Secretary of State had accepted the proposal in its entirety in an extremely supportive and positive report.

Members were informed that Housing Hartlepool and Council officers were working very closely with affected residents to ensure the smooth transition to new homes with a lot of support from the residents. The Officers involved were commended for their hard work and commitment during what had been a very complicated process that would ensure big improvements to the area in the coming months.

Decision

The report was noted.

8. Quarter 4 – Corporate Plan Report 2010/2011 (*Corporate Management Team*)

Type of decision

None.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the progress made towards achieving the Corporate Plan Actions in order to provide timely information and allow any necessary decisions to be taken.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder for Performance presented a report which described progress towards achieving the actions within the Corporate Plan using the traffic light system of Green, Amber and Red. The report provided an overview of Council performance, with separate sections providing more detailed information for each Portfolio Holder to consider.

A number of areas of success were highlighted within the report by individual portfolio holders and the importance of unannounced visits and inspections of providers of commissioned services was reiterated.

Decision

The current position with regard to performance was noted.

**9. Local Area Agreement Quarter 4 (2010/2011)
Summary of Performance** (*Assistant Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

For information only.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on performance against the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for 2010/11 at the end of quarter 4, March 2011.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented a report which highlighted that in 2010/11 the LAA included 34 outcomes, structured around the eight Community Strategy Themes. The report summarised the performance against targets and outlined the progress made in each theme. Members were asked to note that the majority of targets had been reached or had been exceeded.

Decision

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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