

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

18 July 2011

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

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Robbie Payne (Deputy Mayor) (Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder)
Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Nicola Bailey, Director of Child and Adult Services
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Louise Wallace, Assistant Director, Health Improvement
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Catherine Frank, Local Strategic Partnership Manager
Laura McGuinness, Project Manager
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

38. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jonathan Brash (Performance Portfolio Holder), Pamela Hargreaves (Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder), Peter Jackson (Cabinet Member without Portfolio) and Hilary Thompson (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder).

39. Inquorate Meeting

It was noted that the meeting was not quorate. The Mayor indicated that (as permitted under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Constitution) he would exercise his powers of decision and that he would do so in accordance with the wishes of the Members present, indicated in the usual way. Each of the decisions set out in the decision record were confirmed by the Mayor accordingly.

40. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

41. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2011 (adjourned and reconvened on 7 July 2011)

Received.

42. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2011/2012 (Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To consider the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2011/2012 which was a requirement under the Budget and Policy Framework.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health Services presented the report which set out details of Hartlepool's Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2011/2012. The plan was a requirement of the Food Standards Agency and formed the basis on which the Authority may be monitored and audited and verify whether the service provided was effective in protecting the public. The plan set out the Council's aims in respect of its food law service. Whilst focussing on 2011/2012, it also identified longer term objectives as well as reviewed performance for 2010/2011.

The Portfolio Holder did provide a note of caution that in times of recession, businesses may not be as vigilant in monitoring food hygiene and preparation and although this was a statutory service provided by the local authority, he did have some concerns at potential threats to departmental budgets during the consideration of future budgetary savings. It was reiterated that this was a vital service for the health and well being of the public.

Decision

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan was referred to Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum for consideration.

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

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applied.

Purpose of report

For Cabinet to consider 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 report set out a series of proposals aimed at changing 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.

The views received from Council Working Group and the relevant partners consulted as part of the review were set out in the report in sections 3 and 4 respectively and were summarised within Appendix C. Cabinet was requested to make a number of decisions where the implication of the introduction of statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards was currently uncertain. Therefore whilst further statutory guidance was awaited on the implementation of Health and Wellbeing Boards, Cabinet were requested to make a number of 'in principle' decisions. A further report will be brought to Cabinet once the statutory guidance was available and those decisions, if unaffected, will be implemented. If the 'in principle' decisions were affected then Cabinet will be asked to consider alternative proposals which reflect the new position.

Cabinet considered the proposals as follows:

Decision (iii) – Cabinet was requested to agree the development of Face the Public events as outlined in Section 5 of Appendix C and Appendix A4 (original proposal).

Members were supportive of this proposal as similar events had proved to work well with the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and provided a good opportunity for a range of decision makers from different organisations to

participate. It was suggested that the timing of the events be varied, taking into account the time of year of the event to ensure maximum participation. It was noted that the effectiveness of these events would be monitored and reported back to Cabinet.

Decision (iv) – Cabinet was requested to agree the merging of the Economic Forum and Skills Partnerships (original proposal).

Members supported this proposal.

Decision (v) – Cabinet was requested to agree the end of the Culture, Leisure and Community Learning and Environment theme partnerships (original proposal).

In view of some concerns expressed by Members, the Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services asked Members to note that the issues covered by these two partnerships would be covered through the four remaining theme groups and strategic partners group. Members supported this proposal.

Decision (viii) – Cabinet was requested to agree the reduction of Neighbourhood Consultative Forum meetings to quarterly during 2011/12 (original proposal).

Members supported this proposal.

Decision (ix) – Cabinet was requested to agree to end the Police and Community Safety Liaison Forums and Parish Liaison Meetings (original proposal).

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services noted that concerns with this proposal had been raised by Parish Councillors and Cabinet were requested to consider the introduction of meetings with the Mayor and Chair of Parish Councillors. It was reported that the Ward Councillor for Elwick also had concerns at the removal of regular meetings with the Parish Councillors.

However, Members supported the proposals and agreed that meetings be arranged for the Mayor and Parish Councillors twice a year and that the Neighbourhood Manager for the area along with relevant Ward Councillors also be invited.

It was noted that a key factor to the success of neighbourhood policing was for the police to attend local residents groups. In addition, the District Commander of Cleveland Police would be invited to the Face the Public events.

Decision (vii) – Cabinet was requested to agree either an approach to neighbourhood issues from the options included within Appendix A6 or to reduce to two Neighbourhood Forums and the introduction of 2 groups which would cover the north and south areas of the Borough including representatives of local constituted groups.

During the discussions that followed it was noted that Cabinet were keen to create a borough-wide forum that would look at the issues affecting people's day to day lives but on a town wide basis. It was agreed that the forum should meet every 10 weeks and that the Chair of the Council should chair the meeting with a back bench Member as vice chair. A Member questioned whether there would be a budget made available to the Forum in a similar way to the way the Minor Works Budget currently operated. The Mayor responded that if this was deemed necessary, it would form part of the budget setting process.

Decision (x) – Cabinet was requested to disband the role of Resident Representatives from April 2012 (original proposal).

Members supported this proposal.

Decision (xi) – Cabinet was requested to introduce the role of 'Neighbourhood Voice' from May 2012 in view of the earlier decision to create one borough-wide forum meeting.

A Member questioned the difference between the current resident representatives and the proposed neighbourhood voices. The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) indicated that a neighbourhood voice would be a representative from an established resident's association that had been in existence for over a year. It was suggested that as the recent Boundary Commission review had proposed a reduction to 11 bigger wards across the town resulting in an increased workload of local councillors, the neighbourhood voice representative may provide an additional support mechanism for the local ward councillors.

During the discussions that followed there was some concern expressed that not every area in the town had residents' associations and this may exclude some areas from having representation via a neighbourhood voice representative. However, it was noted that ward councillors were elected as local representatives for all areas across the town and residents can and do approach their ward councillors with all kinds of issues.

The introduction of resident representatives had been extremely successful in a number of areas with several becoming local ward councillors. However, it was suggested that a more structured role was now required and should be via neighbourhood voice representatives from established residents' groups across the town. A Member commented that it was important to have an intermediate role between the community and the decision makers and it was hoped the neighbourhood voice representative would fulfil this role.

It was suggested that the election of neighbourhood voice representatives should take place at one of the Neighbourhood Forum meetings. However, it was noted that the Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency had a very close working relationship as an umbrella organisation with all residents associations and groups and may be best placed to administer the election process. Members were reassured that any election process followed would be transparent. In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that a draft job description for the role of neighbourhood voice representative had been included as appendix A7 but that this would be further developed reflecting Cabinet's views and that the election process would be tightened up based on Members' comments.

It was noted that the Council had a proven track record of connecting well with the community and was seen nationally to be quite innovative in this regard and it was hoped that the introduction of the neighbourhood voice representatives would continue this excellent work.

Members supported the proposal to introduce the role of 'Neighbourhood Voices' from May 2012.

Decision (vi) – In view of Cabinet's earlier decision to create one borough-wide neighbourhood forum, Cabinet was also requested to agree that community representation be included within the membership of the theme groups as set out in paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of Appendix A (original proposal).

It was noted that the community representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board would be set out within statutory guidance yet to be issued. Early indications were that this would be through the local Health Watch (Hartlepool LINKs).

Members supported this proposal.

Decision (ii) – Cabinet was requested to agree 'in principle' either the development of a Strategic Partners Group as outlined in section 4 of Appendix A and its membership from the options set out in appendix A3 (original proposal) or the development of a Strategic Partners Group with 12 strategic partner representatives.

A discussion ensued on the proposals and comments received from the Council Working Group and the relevant partners. It was suggested that a strong local authority representation should be included within the Strategic Partners Group (SPG) including all Cabinet Members and the Chief Executive. It was suggested that some of the suggested representatives on the Group may have conflicts of interest in relation to delivering services. However, although the Group was not a decision making body, the need to ensure all representatives were clear on the implications of potential conflicts of interests was noted.

It was noted that as regular meetings with Town and Parish Councillors had been agreed earlier in the meeting there was no need for a representative to be included within the membership of the SPG. In relation to the two NHS Foundation Trust representatives on the SPG, this would be dependent on the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board which was yet to be agreed. It was further noted that any environmental issues would be represented by relevant portfolio holder on the SPG.

Having discussed the options and comments received, Cabinet Members supported option 2 for the membership of the Strategic Partners Group, including all Cabinet Members and the Chief Executive.

Decision (xii) – Cabinet was requested to either refocus Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) on the 5% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Hartlepool (original proposal) or hold off the decision until the new wards are implemented.

It was noted that the previous funding arrangements for NAPs were no longer in place and Members had concerns at how residents' expectations would be managed and how the NAPs could be made useful without having budgets to allocate. A Member commented that within the NAP areas there were a number of representatives that were committed to improving their local area. This would remain a valuable asset and the NAP would provide an effective mechanism to ensure specific local issues and suggested ways forward were identified.

Members supported the proposal to refocus NAPs on the 5% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Hartlepool and asked for a report to be brought back to Cabinet outlining how this could be taken forward.

Decision (i) – Given the decision already taken, Cabinet was requested to agree 'in principle' the proposed structure for community stakeholder involvement and engagement (original proposal)

Members were asked to note that a further report would be submitted as and when further guidance was available on the future Health and Well Being Board. The Assistant Director, Public Health confirmed that the Health and Well Being Board would set up as a shadow board from September as part of the early pathfinder programme that we are signed up to. The statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards have to be in place from 2013.

Members supported the proposed structure for community stakeholder involvement and engagement.

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that an amended timetable would be developed based on the decisions taken at this meeting (Decision xiii).

Decision

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) In principle, the proposed structure for community and stakeholder involvement and engagement as set out in Appendix A1 and included on page 1 of appendix C.
- (ii) In principle, that a Strategic Partners Group be created to include the Mayor, all Cabinet Members and Chief Executive and option 2 from appendix A3 for the remaining membership.
- (iii) The development of Face the Public events as outlined in Section 5 of Appendix A and Appendix A4.
- (iv) To merge the Economic Forum and Skills Partnerships.
- (v) To end the Culture, Leisure and Community Learning and Environment theme partnerships.
- (vi) That community representation be included within the membership of theme groups as set out in paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of appendix A (1 VCS and 1 Neighbourhood Voice). The exception to this will be the Health & Wellbeing Board where community representation will most likely be required to come from the local Health Watch, Hartlepool LINKs.
- (vii) A Borough-wide Forum be created that will meet every 10 weeks and have the Chairman of the Council as Chair and a backbench councillor as Vice Chair.
- (viii) To reduce Neighbourhood Consultative Forum meetings to quarterly during 2011/12
- (ix) To end the Police & Community Safety Liaison and Parish Liaison Meetings and introduce meetings twice a year between the Mayor and the Chairs of the Town and Parish Councils with the relevant Neighbourhood Manager and Ward Councillors invited.
- (x) To disband the role of Resident Representative from April 2012.
- (xi) To introduce 'Neighbourhood Voices' as set out in paragraph 8.1 of appendix A and appendix A7 with individuals nominated being a member of a Resident's Association that had been in existence for more than a year.
- (xii) To refocus NAPs on the 5% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Hartlepool and a further report to be brought to Cabinet on the options available for delivering this.
- (xiii) That a new implementation timetable will be developed based on the above decisions.

44. Department for Work and Pensions – Work Programme *(Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) applied, covered by General Exception Rule.

Purpose of report

To comment and endorse the proposed actions for the Council to sub-contract with Avanta and deliver the new Work Programme

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report outlined the details of the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) new Work Programme; the opportunity for the Council/Hartlepool Works to become a subcontractor and the contractual and financial implications involved. Confidential information relating to financial and contractual issues was highlighted in Appendix 1. **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, paragraph 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

A Member expressed some concerns that this report had been submitted late and Members were informed that as there had been a potential conflict of interest with the relevant portfolio Holder, it had been escalated to Cabinet. The Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) added that due to the commercial timescale and competitive framework for the delivery of the DWP Work Programme it had been necessary to submit this report to Cabinet within a very short timescale.

In response to a request for clarification from a Member, the Economic Development Team Manager confirmed that the contract was part of a national employability programme and superseded most other employability schemes. It was based on a result led process aimed at bringing non economically active residents into work and was a mandatory programme covering residents who had been unemployed for over six months. It was noted that the Council had been very successful in assisting with and sustaining employment for residents of the town previously and it was hoped that the experience and skills gained from providing this service could mould the programme to maximise the benefits for local residents.

A Member sought clarification on the financial and risk implications of the contract. The Economic Development Manager informed Members that work was ongoing with Legal Services, Human Resources and the Finance Division to quantify the terms and conditions of the contract as well as any TUPE arrangements that may be required. In response to a further question, the Economic Development Officer confirmed that there was likely to be some level of liability for the Council although the detail of this was not yet calculated and every effort would be made to minimise any potential liabilities. He added that should any of the risk or financial implications not be at an acceptable level, the contract would not be signed. One of the implications of not signing the contract would be that further local authority

employees would be at risk of redundancy at the end of the financial year and there was concern that the residents of Hartlepool would not have the benefit of the experience and knowledge of Council officers that had been gained over the years.

A discussion ensued on the alternative prime providers who were competing for the contract and it was confirmed that they already had established sub-contractor arrangements in place with no option available for Hartlepool to be involved. For clarification, the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that if an alternative prime provider to Avanta were to provide the programme, the local authority would have no involvement or influence in how the programme was delivered. However, local authority officers would have full involvement through a sub-contract with Avanta. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that Avanta were a consortium of a range of private companies specialising in training and employment.

It was suggested that Cabinet agree in principle the proposed actions to enable the Council/Hartlepool Works to deliver the Work Programme subject to the TUPE arrangements being agreed and clarification provided on the key terms and conditions and financial and risk implications of the contract issued by Avanta.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning Services indicated that there was potential income to be gained by the local authority from undertaking this contract should people gain sustained employment. The Chief Executive added that this programme was a new approach by Central Government to enable the private sector to create jobs and a lot of contracts had been allocated to large private groups of companies who were paid on results. Government guidance did not specify any involvement of the local authority but the Economic Development Team had identified the advantage of being involved for the benefit of local residents and had approached Avanta to be part of the sub-contracting arrangements.

A Member sought clarification on the reference to Ingeus Deloitte delivering the programme across the Tees Valley area including Hartlepool and how this affected the Avanta contract. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that Job Centre Plus will make referrals to the prime providers on a pre determined level and Avanta have negotiated 47% of these referrals.

Decision

- (i) That in accordance with Rule 18 of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the above decision be considered as urgent due to the commercial timescale and competitive framework for the delivery of the DWP Work Programme Contract that relates specifically to Avanta and their main contract terms and conditions issued by DWP. Therefore, the Mayor decided that in accordance

with Rule 18 the decision should not be subject to the call in procedures.

- (ii) The proposed actions to enable the Council/Hartlepool Works to deliver the Work Programme were approved.
- (iii) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with The Mayor, to sign the Avanta contract and submit this document to Avanta before close of play on Friday 22 July 2011 subject to confirming TUPE arrangements, identifying the financial and risk implications and the key terms and conditions of the contract issued by Avanta.

45. Early Detection and Awareness of Cancer (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the content of a presentation regarding the early detection and awareness of a cancer programme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

A detailed and comprehensive presentation was provided for Members and highlighted that in December 2007, the Department of Health launched The Cancer Reform Strategy, which outlined actions to improve cancer services across the NHS. A key strand of this work highlighted the importance of raising awareness in the general population. The resources allocated to Hartlepool had been used to undertake a Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM). This was used to measure levels of cancer awareness, explore risk factors for poor cancer awareness and develop and evaluate interventions to promote cancer awareness in the population.

A site specific CAM had been conducted across Hartlepool asking the population what they understood to be the signs and symptoms of lung and bowel cancer.

- 33% of respondents were unable to name any sign or symptom of bowel cancer
- 26% of respondents were unable to name any sign or symptoms of lung cancer.

The results of the first CAM had enabled a better understanding of the level of public knowledge of the signs and symptoms of lung and bowel cancer in the population of Hartlepool. As a result of this survey, an extensive

awareness raising campaign had been undertaken including promotional leaflets and posters. Following this extensive campaign, a second CAM would be conducted to assess if the level of public knowledge on the signs and symptoms of these cancers had improved.

A Member questioned whether the Council's publication Hartbeat had been utilised as part of the awareness raising campaign. The Project Manager responded that many publications were used but this campaign was specifically promoted through the Hartlepool Mail. However, the Assistant Director, Public Health confirmed that the provision of the resources to undertake the campaign had been conditional on how it that resource was spent and acknowledged that Hartbeat Magazine was an excellent resource that would be utilised for future campaigns wherever possible.

A Member sought clarification on why Hartlepool had lower awareness levels of the signs and symptoms of certain cancers than the rest of the north east. The Assistant Director, Public Health indicated that although she could not give a definitive answer, despite Hartlepool providing excellent treatment services and referral timescales. The Director of Child and Adult Services added that raising awareness was all part of encouraging people to present themselves to their GP at an early stage as this was not happening and this needed to be rectified. The Project Manager indicated that there was an awful lot of fear involved and people need to be aware that detection of cancer at an early stage increased the chance of successful treatment. It was suggested that increasing the percentage of screening programmes should be a priority of the health and well being strategy.

Members welcomed the report, the findings of the survey and the work undertaken to raise awareness of the symptoms of lung and bowel cancer which was similar to the work undertaken by the British Heart Foundation in relation to raising awareness of cardio vascular disease.

Decision

The report and presentation were noted.

46. Commissioning on Funding of Care and Support *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the findings of the Commission on Funding of Care and Support and the significant recommendations that have been made regarding the adult social care system in the future.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided information about the work of the Dilnott Commission, which was established to review future funding of care and support and the report that was published on 4 July 2011. The Commission's findings were detailed in the report.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Child and Adult Services indicated that the local authority had provided a response to the Commission's review as part of a huge consultation process and this report highlighted the outcome of that review. A further report would be submitted to Cabinet when more detail was available.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) A further report to be submitted to Cabinet when more detail was available.

47. Tackling Empty Homes – Baden Street Improvement Scheme (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To outline a pilot proposal for tackling empty homes in Baden Street that if successful could be applied to other areas of the town and to advise Cabinet how this proposal would be funded.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided the context for tackling empty properties in Hartlepool. It described the background to the development of regeneration proposals for Baden Street and sought endorsement to implement the proposal with

the use of Council funds. It was noted that 50% of the properties within Baden Street were void. The proposals included:

- A landlord incentive scheme
- Tenant support
- Security
- Existing Problem Tenants and Landlords
- Communication Strategy
- Environmental Improvements
- Deliverability

It was noted that the current allocation of resources for this scheme was £160,000.

Cabinet Members were concerned that the communication of this scheme had not been as effective as it could as Cabinet had recognised some time ago the importance of bringing empty properties back into use. A number of options to reuse properties had been examined and Baden Street had been identified as the worst area in the town and was therefore prioritised. It was noted that generally landlords were supportive of the scheme as they wanted to see the area improved. However, the Council's full enforcement powers would be utilised as far as compulsory purchase orders if necessary, should any landlords not be willing to participate in the scheme. In addition to this, full enforcement powers would be utilised on any tenants who were not participating in the scheme.

Members emphasised that any financial incentive scheme should be heavily focussed on a loan aspect with repayment plans and possible charges on properties being in place to recoup any funding provided to landlords or tenants. It was highlighted that an increased police presence was key in the early stages this had been noted in this area already. In relation to the tenant incentives, there was also potential schemes around recycling of furniture and white goods.

The aim of the scheme was to bring properties back into use in areas that were in danger of falling into neglect if no improvements were made. This will be implemented at the lowest possible cost and it was hoped that the only expenditure to be incurred that cannot be recouped would be for police, security and environmental improvements.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that a report would be submitted the relevant Portfolio Holder in relation to tenant support and the provision of a furniture and white goods project. In addition to this, the Assistant Director added that this scheme provided a more holistic approach with the funding of this scheme being insignificant against the resources required to implement compulsory purchase orders and demolish properties.

It was suggested that either the Council's workforce or the Probation's payback scheme should be utilised wherever possible in this scheme as it

would provide gainful employment and an increased skill base.

The Mayor requested that a report be submitted to his Portfolio meeting including details of progress made with each individual property in Baden Street and whether any intervention was required.

Decision

- (i) That a report be submitted to the Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder detailing the progress made with each individual property in Baden Street and whether any intervention was required.
- (ii) The report was noted.

48. Enterprise Zones (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone proposals to Government. In addition the report highlights the potential financial impacts of the proposed Enterprise Zones in the light of emerging Government policy on areas retaining non domestic rate income.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor presented a report which included details of the proposed Enterprise Zones in Tees Valley and an attached Appendix that identified the locations of the sites. Details were also provided on projected private investment and job creation. In addition the report highlighted the potential financial impacts of the proposed Enterprise Zones in the light of emerging Government policy on areas retaining non domestic rate income.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning indicated that although a formal response would not be received until the end of July at the earliest, early indications were that the Council's proposal was received favourably and there should not be any fundamental changes.

A Member commented that the positives of what Hartlepool may receive from this proposal should be highlighted. The Assistant Director confirmed that Hartlepool has around 30% of land in a proposed discounted business rates zone which was a very positive outcome.

Decision

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.57 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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