

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

26 SEPTEMBER 2011

The meeting commenced at 9.15 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Jonathan Brash (Housing and Transition Portfolio Holder)
Robbie Payne (Deputy Mayor) (Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder),
Pam Hargreaves (Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder),
Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).
Peter Jackson (Regeneration and Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder),
Hilary Thompson (Performance Portfolio Holder),

Also Present: Councillors Mick Fenwick, Brenda Loynes, Dr George Morris and Ray Wells.
Resident Representative John Maxwell.
Jane Herring, Public Health Contract Manager, NHS Tees

Officers: Nicola Bailey, Acting Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive,
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Caroline O'Neill, Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement
Louise Wallace, Assistant Director, Health Improvement
Derek Gouldbum, Urban and Planning Policy Manager
Andrew Carter, Senior Planning Officer
Matthew King, Principal Planning Officer
Chris Pipe, Planning Services Manager
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager

96. Apologies for Absence

Cath Hill (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder) and Chris Simmons (Children's Services Portfolio Holder).

97. Declarations of interest by members

Councillor Hilary Thompson declared a personal interest in Minute 101 “Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Houses”.

98. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011

Confirmed.

99. Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report (Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To notify Cabinet of feedback from the public consultation on the revised Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, to highlight changes in national planning policy which will impact on the preparation of the Core Strategy and to set out the officer recommendations on key policy issues in relation to the Core Strategy Publication document.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Mayor reported that in September 2010 Cabinet received a report detailing feedback from formal consultation on the first Core Strategy Preferred Options document. Cabinet was also notified of emerging policy changes following a change of national government. In the light of this information Cabinet decided to revisit the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy is required to reflect national and regional policy and as with previous stages the Council needs to be mindful of major changes in government policy which have been developing since the last election. The most significant of these are as follows:-

- The proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- The introduction of Enterprise Zones.
- A new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Neighbourhood Planning.

Policies within the Core Strategy must be informed by a strong evidence base, without which the plan could be deemed to be unsound by the Inspector. Details of these were set out in the report together with the three additional evidence reports which were subsequently prepared providing further clarification on housing requirements and delivery:-

- Future Housing Provision in the Borough for the Next 15 Years (September 2010)
- Executive Housing Need in the Borough (November 2010)
- Housing Implementation Strategy (November 2010)

Officers were continuing to review and refresh the evidence base to ensure that this was as up to date as possible when the Core Strategy was published. To this end a review of the Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment was currently being carried out. In addition, there was a requirement to prepare a Local Infrastructure Plan (LIP) which identified the elements of key infrastructure (e.g. transport, utilities, green infrastructure, education and health provision) which needed to be provided to support the delivery of the Core Strategy. A draft version of this was currently being consulted on with key service providers and stakeholders and would be presented to Cabinet for approval in due course. A peer review of the document would also be undertaken, free of charge, by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) who would do an independent assessment of the evidence base and provide a report to be used internally.

The second consultation period ran from 29th November 2010 to 11th February 2011. The second Preferred Options document along with its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment was widely consulted upon. The consultation included a range of measures including distributing letters to all Hartlepool residents, statutory consultees and other stakeholders, attending meetings with key interest and community groups; attendance at Neighbourhood Consultative Forums, Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Forums, the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Forum and other local group meetings; staffed and unstaffed exhibition stands in libraries, Middleton Grange Shopping Centre, supermarkets and other local venues across the Borough.

The consultation period generated 1241 responses in total, 1198 of which were from individual Hartlepool residents and residents' relatives living outside the Borough and the remaining 43 were from a variety of other stakeholders including Parish Councils, Residents Associations, Statutory Consultees, developers/consultancies, nature groups and other interest groups. All responses had been copied into two documents which were available to view on the Council's website.

These responses had been summarised and were submitted with the report as Appendix 2. A detailed Consultation Statement would be prepared for the Publication stage in line with the Planning Regulations which would set out in detail how the Councils would respond to these submissions.

The vast majority of responses received related to the identification and location of sites for housing, particularly those at Claxton (south western extension), Tunstall Farm and Quarry Farm. There were also a significant number of concerns raised in relation to the proposed eco-industries allocation at Graythorp.

The main issues that need to be considered in preparing the Publication document were set out in detail in the report and focussed on the following issues/sites -

- Hartlepool Docks
- South–West Extension (Claxton)
- Executive Housing Sites
- Other Housing Issues
- Employment Allocations

In progressing the Core Strategy the next step in the process was to move to Publication stage. Taking account of feedback from both Preferred Options consultation stages and views expressed by Cabinet, Officers would continue to work on refining the policies and supporting text to produce the Publication document. The intention was to present this to Cabinet in January 2012 after which there would be a six week consultation period. Any amendments following that stage would be made to the document prior to it being sent off to the Secretary of State who would then arrange for Examination in Public to be held where key objections would be discussed in detail.

It was highlighted at the meeting by officers from the Urban Regeneration and Planning Policy Team that Hartlepool had not met its previous new housing targets set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) only achieving an average of 200 to 300 new builds each year. The projections now made are considered to be more achievable. They are based on the updated evidence base which more accurately reflect factors such as past completion trends, the current housing market and government projected household formation rates. The proposals also reflect the need for executive housing in particular. Essentially at this time the borough had run out of land for new housing approvals; all available sites were under construction or had existing planning approvals.

There was also a need to bring forward new affordable housing development and it was proposed that on new developments over 15 houses, a 10% minimum of affordable housing was required. It was stressed that the priority would be to provide affordable houses on new development sites although in certain circumstances sums could be commuted to provide development elsewhere or support the bringing of empty properties back into use.

The Mayor questioned the evidence base that was supporting the Core Strategy; would it stand up to scrutiny? Officers indicated that national statistics such as those on household formation rates had been used in developing the housing estimates; they were robust.

The Mayor questioned the percentage of affordable housing being requested on development sites. Officers stated that the level of affordable housing provision needed to take account of development viability on each site. The proposed policy requires a minimum level of 10% (a figure derived

from a previous viability assessment carried out on a range of sites across the Borough) rising to 30% depending on the outcome of a viability assessment based on a government prepared methodology. The Mayor indicated that he had been asked why we could not deliver 100% affordable housing sites. Officers commented that government funding previously available to support affordable housing provision had been cut drastically and it was simply the case that the only way now to get affordable housing delivered was through private developments.

The Core Strategy would be adopted in 2012 and there could be a change again in government only a few years after that. The Mayor also asked if the new Core Strategy was flexible enough to adapt to the changes over the next fifteen years. Officers again considered the strategy to be robust enough and able to adapt to change should it be required.

The Mayor commented that there had been an excellent response to the consultation.

The Mayor then opened the issue to Cabinet for discussion. Each of the main sites/issues were dealt with in turn to focus the debate. The main concerns/views expressed by Cabinet, and their questions and response are reflected below -

Hartlepool Docks (Victoria Harbour)

- One of the main issues was that the site, through PD Ports, had changed ownership three times in the last two years. The current owners' now favoured focussing development around offshore wind and renewable energy based manufacturing and construction. If this happened the site could be active for the next 10 to 20 years. PD Ports had, however, objected on the basis that they wished to retain parts of the site for housing and mixed-use development. In officers' opinion, the development of housing in close proximity to such uses would be incompatible on the basis of noise and disturbance. The site was also within the Enterprise Zone and housing on such a site would be incompatible with this status and potentially place the Council at odds with Enterprise Zone requirements. Members considered that job creation was more important for the site than housing.

South-West Extension (Claxton)

- Fens Residents Association had submitted a comprehensive objection to this proposed development site on the basis of an over-estimation of housing need, loss of green field land, traffic congestion, flooding, loss of wildlife habitat, separation between the site and Greatham village, the need for affordable housing and the lack of available school places. Whilst it was noted that Council officers were working with The Fens Residents Association to see how some of their concerns could be addressed, their fundamental objection remains in place.

- In relation to over estimation of housing need, officers highlighted the revised evidence base which has led to a overall reduction in projected housing need from the RSS target of around 1500 dwellings including around 350 removed from the Claxton site. The removal of the Victoria Harbour development meant a substantial site was required – this was the most attractive of the potential large sites.
- The site would be subject to a detailed master-plan which would look at site specific issues including a new access from the A689 to alleviate traffic concerns; a new local centre which would be stipulated to be built early in the development to reduce pressure at Catcote Road; green infrastructure and a site for a new primary school.
- Flooding issues could be resolved through a bespoke surface water drainage solution following consultation with Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA). The EA had stipulated that no additional flow over and above that which currently happens could be routed into Greatham Creek and solutions such as balancing ponds would need to be looked at.
- Mr Robert Smith from Fens Residents Association outlined local residents concerns at the proposed South-West extension.
 - the danger of over-supply of housing
 - House values already being adversely affected and increasing numbers of properties being bought by private landlords.
 - Incentivised sales of new homes creating localised black-spots in estates like the Fens similar to the town centre.
 - The lack of affordable housing needed to be tackled directly not through piggy-backing solutions on large development sites like the one proposed.
 - Flooding was a real concern for residents and this development would only exacerbate the problem. The EA works had only alleviated some of the problems.
 - The site would require huge traffic works to alleviate the chaos it will cause. If a new access was needed could Dalton Back Lane be used.
 - Victoria harbour could have provided the housing needs of the town. Its development was being brushed aside on the vague potential of 'renewables' industries coming into the town. It had to be hoped that this site would be reassessed quickly.
 - If the development happened then the green wedge that was promised in the first consultation had to be an exemplar of best practice.
 - Nothing seemed to have changed between the first and second consultation exercises.
 - The policy of relying on private development to solve the need for affordable housing was unsustainable.
- The Mayor commented that it would be preferable if 'we' didn't need to rely on private development for affordable housing but following the withdrawal of government funding, there was no alternative. This plan was to set the scene for the next 15 years for Hartlepool. If 'we' looked back over the past six decades every significant expansion of the town had been faced with exactly the same arguments. The town

must grow to move forward. That growth in housing was not going to come from Victoria Harbour; that had gone. Claxton was the next most sensible suggestion and would have a true mix of housing from affordable housing through to executive homes. The villages would be protected; there would not be encroachment on them. The Dalton Back Lane access option would be investigated. As for schools the advice was that a primary school was needed but there was secondary school capacity across the town. The Mayor did consider that the questions around school capacity had not yet been fully addressed.

- Concern was expressed at the potential detrimental effect of this site on the town centre. Every new development seemed to bring forward the demise of the town centre housing. The Strategy did not seem strong enough in protecting the town centre. Officers indicated that they did recognise in the Strategy the critical town centre core; there were strong policies supporting the town centre.
- Members considered the Fens Residents response to be considered and well thought out. It was understandable that no one wanted such a large development on their doorstep. The protection for the villages was a key step.
- Access arrangements needed to be well thought out; there were already too many bad examples around the town.

Executive Housing

Tunstall Farm

- This site had originally been included in the local plan but then rejected by the Planning Inspector following a Public Inquiry.
- Councillor Wells, Park Ward, indicated that the Park Ward had two of the executive housing sites proposed; Tunstall Farm and Quarry Farm. There had been over a 1000 objections to the sites together with good planning reasons submitted for their removal from the Strategy. The Tunstall Farm site had already been removed once by the Inspector and yet it seemed the wishes of the residents was blatantly being ignored. The flooding concerns had not been addressed and the recent works by the EA were only to ease not solve the flooding issues.
- The Mayor considered that the Claxton site through a proper mix of housing types could meet the need for executive housing in the town. The Wynyard site provided a development to attract incoming executives into the borough; it had proved very successful for Stockton and could be so for Hartlepool. The new hospital would also increase the demand. The Mayor was of the opinion that Tunstall Farm should be removed from the Strategy.
- Cabinet Members also supported the removal of the Tunstall Farm site. One commented that the reason for the low level of executive housing in Hartlepool despite the large development at Middle Warren was due to developers constantly seeking changes in density on approved sites.
- A Cabinet Member recalled the scrutiny investigation into flooding

undertaken in 2003 where it had been stated that some form of development at Tunstall Farm could alleviate the flooding problems by making the resolution of the drainage issues a condition of the development. Officers indicated that any development wouldn't exacerbate the problems and additional measures would be required as part of such a development. The EA had also informed the authority that the recent works had been to alleviate the current flooding problem.

Quarry Farm

- Officers indicated that one of the main issues highlighted in the consultation responses had been road safety in and around Elwick. Highway Engineers had stated that any issues could be mitigated against.
- The Mayor commented that this site was similar to the Tunstall Farm site in that Cabinet had already considered that it was minded to remove this potential site.
- A Cabinet Member considered the potential site an unnecessary incursion into the countryside that had received significant numbers of objections. There were real concerns on road safety grounds, particularly with the additional traffic through the villages and the increased traffic using the junctions on the A19 where there had already been fatalities in the last year. Officers did indicate that the developers had appointed traffic consultants and their findings indicated that there were no great concerns on traffic grounds.
- There was concern raised at the issue of the loss of green field land in that this was a relatively small development yet the south-west extension was also green field land and involved significantly more land. It did appear that objections in some areas carried more weight than others.
- It was highlighted that the only development site without any resident's objections was Wynyard. The concerns with traffic with the South-West extension could be resolved before the development took place, they couldn't with the Quarry Farm site.

Wynyard

- As previously indicated, there had been no resident's objections received on the Wynyard proposals. Officers indicated that there were issues raised by some statutory consultees primarily relating to highways and environmental matters and discussions are continuing to seek to resolve these. The Mayor considered that this was an opportunity for Hartlepool to benefit from Wynyard village in the same way Stockton had.
- Officers indicated that the authority's Ecologist had commented that it would be beneficial not to develop too close to the Castle Eden Walkway to protect the path and the woodland around it. The plans should therefore been adjusted to acknowledge this.
- In relation to the sites on the north of the A689 there had been comments received in relation to the loss of wildlife habitat. The Wynyard Park site did already have approval for business use and

amending that to executive housing would not have a significantly greater impact on wildlife habitat and would be an acceptable change in light of the demand for this type of housing.

- The Mayor's only concern was that the lessons of Middlesbrough and the Ingleby Barwick development needed to be acknowledged. Wynyard needed to be seen as a site to attract new people into Hartlepool not current residents out.

Other Sites – Upper Warren and the Villages

- There had been no resident's objections to the Upper Warren site. The developer had suggested that the area could be broadened and the density increased to provide around 400 homes. There were concerns at this as it would take the site closer to Hart Quarry and reduce the green area between the development and Hart Village. The proposed site followed the contours of the land and avoided the site extending onto higher land. Also, the proposed density of 20 houses per hectare was also seen as appropriate for the site.
- There were few concerns at the proposals for the villages. Traffic issues were again raised but most comments were positive, particularly in respect of the potential for affordable housing.

Employment Allocations

- There had been comments submitted against the Eco-industry Site at Graythorp but most related to waste management and waste disposal sites. The adopted Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents did allocate a waste management site at Graythorp but the evidence base produced in support of this DPD indicated that there is no identified need for any further sites within the Plan period.
- The Mayor stated that in agreeing the Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents the Council was clearly of the view that there would be no more waste disposal sites in Hartlepool. The development of the Eco- industries zone site at Graythorp was about supporting the development of 'clean' industry and that needed to be reinforced.

Following these discussions the majority of the elements of the Strategy Document had been considered. Most of the other issues in the document had received support through the consultation process including employment policies, prioritisation of the town centre for commercial development and housing regeneration, green infrastructure development and climate change policies. The next steps are to incorporate the comments from today into the Publication Document which would be brought back to Cabinet in January for endorsement. The Publication Document would then be subject to a further six week consultation exercise although there would be expected to be limited change made to the document at this stage, as the Publication Document represents the Council's declared policy position. The Mayor added that the final opportunity for people who disagreed with the contents of the Strategy

Document would be the Examination in Public which was likely to be held in the spring of next year. Officers indicated that the Inspector would consider the representations received in relation to the Publication Document and identify those elements of the Strategy that he wished to discuss at the Examination in Public. The public would have the opportunity to submit their comments to him and request an opportunity to speak at the public hearing. The Mayor considered that it was essential that everyone who had made the effort to submit comments should be made aware of the next stages and how they could become involved if they wished.

Members did question the costs associated with the process. Officers indicated that much related to the Inspectors costs and those specifically associated with the hearing. The estimate had been based on neighbouring local authorities' costs for similar exercises.

Cabinet Members wished to record their thanks to the officers involved in the development of the Strategy Document.

Individual Cabinet Members then in turn expressed their support or otherwise for the individual sections of the structure that had been discussed in detail.

Decision

1. That the feedback from the formal public consultation on the second Preferred Options document be noted.
2. That in relation to the following elements of the Strategy Document, Cabinet's recommendations are: -
 - Hartlepool Docks (Victoria Harbour) be retained as an employment site with no provision for housing.
 - South–West Extension (Claxton) be supported as an area for housing development. The site should be developed in accordance with an agreed master plan which should take account of the comments set out above in relation to traffic access and housing mix.
 - Executive Housing Sites – that the proposed development sites at Tunstall Farm and Quarry Farm be removed from the Strategy Document and the Wynyard site be supported.
 - Other Housing Issues – that the small infill sites at Elwick and Hart villages be supported and the Upper Warren site retained on the basis of the area and densities identified in the Preferred Options Document.
 - Employment Allocations – that all the proposals as set out in the report be supported including the retention of the allocation of North Burn and the restriction of further waste management facilities within the proposed Eco industries zone, beyond the provisions set out in the Joint Minerals and Waste DPD.
3. That officers be authorised to progress work on the preparation of the Publication Stage of the Core Strategy.

Councillor Hargreaves left the meeting at this point.

100. Declarations of interest by members

Councillor Peter Jackson declared a personal interest in Minute 101 “Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Houses” during the consideration of the item.

101. Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Houses

(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)

Type of decision

Key Decision – test (i) and (ii) apply. Forward Plan ref. no. RN 72/11.

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the existing Selective Licensing scheme following a management restructure in May 2011, which transferred all private sector housing functions from Public Protection to Housing Services. Cabinet’s approval to the delaying the proposed extension of the Selective Licensing scheme into further areas of Hartlepool until such time as an adequate review of the existing scheme has been completed was also sought.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Housing and Transition Portfolio Holder reported that Housing Act 2004 introduced a discretionary power for Local Housing Authorities to designate areas for the selective licensing of private sector rented housing suffering from, or likely to suffer from, low demand and/or significant and persistent anti-social behaviour. The term “selective” recognised the intention to apply this only to specific targeted areas. Selective licensing was intended to be a focus for intensive area-based activity targeted in a small area normally not more than a ward or 500 to 1000 licensable dwellings.

The 1st phase of selective licensing in Hartlepool was implemented in May 2009 and comprises 6 areas (Areas A to F as set out in appendix A to the report) incorporating 1775 households. Within these areas it was originally estimated that 520 of these properties would be required to be licensed. The Designation lasts for 5 years, to the end of May 2014. Licenses themselves last for 5 years (so one issued in early 2014 would be enforceable until early 2019).

On 3rd May 2011 a trial management restructure was implemented which transferred all housing functions from Public Protection to Housing Services, this was on the back of the transfer of Public Protection from the Community Safety Division to Regeneration and Planning following a Departmental Management restructure in February 2011. The management and operation of the Selective Licensing scheme was relocated to the Housing Options Centre, creating a focal point for all Landlord/Tenant functions. At this stage the Council had issued a total of 558 licenses across the 6 phase 1 areas as shown in the appendices to the report.

Following the management restructure concerns were identified with the operation of the scheme and as a result the Assistant Director called in the internal audit team to review all aspects of the scheme including the identification of potentially licensable properties, the application, assessment, approval and enforcement processes. The Audit review was completed in July 2011 and made a series of recommendations, detailed within the report, to be actioned with high priority.

It was now estimated that approximately 950 properties within the existing licensing areas required a licence, almost double the original estimate. A detailed action plan had been developed and approved by Audit which would resolve the issues identified and ensure the schemes ongoing effectiveness.

The Selective Licensing Steering Group, developed to oversee and guide the operation of the scheme, had also been enhanced, including extending the membership of the group to include more representation from private landlords, managing agents and local residents. This Group had now developed and approved clear terms of reference (inc. at appendix B) and identified the statistical information they require to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the scheme.

The Selective Licensing Steering Group were currently reviewing the baseline data in order to determine whether there were any additional data sets that would be of value to aid the successful operation of the scheme.

At the meeting of Cabinet on 21st February 2011 members were asked to consider developing the Selective Licensing scheme into further areas of Hartlepool and nine additional areas were put forward for consideration. At that time members agreed that all nine areas should be included in the consultation process.

At this stage we do not have the evidence to be able to demonstrate that phase 1 of selective licensing in Hartlepool has succeeded and therefore any proposed extension of the scheme into additional areas could potentially be open to challenge. Additionally, as the audit review of the scheme has confirmed there are significant weaknesses that need to be resolved and although a detailed action plan has been developed to tackle these this will take some time to take effect.

The Portfolio considered that it was essential that the process was right before licensing was extended. It was crucial that the council tackle the problem properties in the town but the processes must be right. There was concern at the delay in extending the licensing areas particularly as residents wished to have the problems they were experiencing tackled in the same way as they had been in the licensed area. Members were disappointed to receive the report. In the additional information to be included in the dataset it was suggested that the number of absentee landlords should be recorded. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Planning commented that there were some very low datasets that were

currently being monitored that didn't add anything to the monitoring process. Officers were looking to add quality data to improve monitoring.

Members questioned the membership of the Steering Group which included a representative from Housing Hartlepool when the licensing regulations specifically excluded social landlords. The Assistant Director indicated that Housing Hartlepool were involved as they could have an impact on the empty properties brought back into use; they were part of the solution to some problems.

Cabinet did feel that residents needed to have confidence in the scheme. The Assistant Director had to be congratulated for going out to residents groups and seeking their views. While the scheme may not be progressing at the pace that had been hoped for, it had to be acknowledged that the problems were being dealt with in the operational side.

Decision

1. That the delaying the extension of the Selective Licensing scheme into a further nine areas be agreed until the effectiveness of the existing scheme could be demonstrated and a thorough evaluation of the evidence was available to indicate the effectiveness of Selective Licensing in Hartlepool.
2. That a further report be submitted to Cabinet in 12 months time in order to aid their decision to designate further areas of Hartlepool for Selective Licensing.

Councillor Jonathan Brash left the meeting at this point.

102. 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.

103. Future of Neighbourhood Management (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision - tests (i) and (ii) applies. Forward Plan reference Number RN66/11.

Purpose of report

To seek agreement on the future approach to Neighbourhood Management, the report includes proposals to end the current arrangements of North, Centre and South.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services reported that the Regeneration and Neighbourhood Management Service Delivery Options review achieved the savings target set but fell short of making any recommendations regarding the future of Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and Neighbourhood Action Plans and their associated Forums due at the time to the uncertainty of the Comprehensive Spending Review and impending Localism Bill.

The Council's Community Involvement and Engagement review included proposals to re-design the current Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and re-focus Neighbourhood Action Plans onto the 5% most highly disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Hartlepool. Details of how the Forums would operate in the future are being worked up and will be presented to Cabinet at a later date.

Cabinet are mindful of ward boundary changes and the financial position facing the Authority. As such a number of options have been discussed at various Council meetings over the last 10 months regarding the LSP review, Neighbourhood Consultative Forums and Resident Representatives, which had subsequently led to discussions over the future shape of Neighbourhood Management.

Cabinet had also indicated that Neighbourhood Management was also an area to be explored regarding identifying efficiencies during the 2010/11 CSR budget scrutiny investigations. Three options have been considered and they were:-

- Option 1 - Retain existing Neighbourhood Management geographical arrangements and staffing structures with three neighbourhood areas.
- Option 2 - Change existing neighbourhood management arrangements by reducing geographical neighbourhoods to two. Options regarding Neighbourhood Management Boundaries were set out in Appendix A to the report.
- Option 3 - This option would involve changing neighbourhood management arrangements by effectively operating on a Town-wide geographical basis with one Manager taking responsibility for Community Development and Empowerment for the whole of the town.

The options presented within this report have been presented to Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 8th and 27th July. The Forum's recommendations were as follows:

- (i) That Option 2 (the retention of existing Neighbourhood Management arrangements by reducing geographical neighbourhoods to two) be identified as the Forum's preferred way forward;
- (ii) That the Forum recognises the close links, and benefits, of the provision of integrated community safety and neighbourhood management arrangements within the new structure; and

- (iii) That in implementing Option 2, emphasis must be placed upon the provision of maximum protection for the provision of services and resources in to Hartlepool's identified areas of deprivation.

The efficiency target of £90,000 allocated against Neighbourhood Management was achievable by moving to two Neighbourhood areas and the loss of two posts. However, when considering the future structure of the service other services/ functions will be considered when determining the final structure.

Cabinet considered that it was a difficult decision to unravel something that worked so well for the community. Facilities such as 173 York Road showed the excellent service provision that could be brought about through such community based services. Members recognised that Hartlepool had been acknowledged as a leader in neighbourhood management. While savings had to be made and the forthcoming changes to ward boundaries brought pressures on this service to change, that should not be lost.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that these services required 'troops on the ground' and somehow the council needed to find a way to provide an essential service without the same amount of money to support it.

Cabinet supported the implementation of Option 2 and asked that an information report be brought outlining the arrangement of the management areas.

Decision

That Option 2 – adapting the existing neighbourhood management arrangements by reducing geographical neighbourhoods to two – be approved and that a further information report be submitted to Cabinet on the arrangement of the two geographical areas.

104. Hearty Lives Hartlepool – Younger and Wiser Programme *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this paper is to brief Cabinet regarding the British Heart Foundation Hearty Lives Programme in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder indicated that the report briefed Cabinet on the award of British Heart Foundation Hearty Lives funding to deliver a school based intervention supporting children and young people to make healthier choices and break the cycle of ill health and premature death from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) experienced by their

parents and grandparents through getting children and young people engaged, proactive, healthy and skilled to make healthier choices.

The Assistant Director, Health Improvement, gave a presentation outlining how the programme would be delivered in Hartlepool. Members supported the programme and considered that in being aimed at children, the healthy lives messages may get into families as well. It was suggested that as well as targeting the School Heads, the many Councillors who were school governors should also be encouraged to have their schools involved in the programme.

Decision

That the report be noted and the aims and objectives of the programme be endorsed and that a progress report be submitted in due course.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 3 OCTOBER 2011