

# **REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

**14<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Peter Jackson (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development and Skills)

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)  
Rob Smith, Senior Regeneration Officer  
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

**1. Delivery of the Church Square Masterplan** *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

**Type of decision**

Key (test 1 applies)

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the public consultation exercise for the Church Square Masterplan and to seek approval from the Portfolio Holder to commence the first phase of works subject to approval of the funding arrangements by Council.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The draft plans for the Church Square Masterplan were approved for public consultation by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development in July 2011. Provisional approval was also given for the delivery of the first phase of works subject to consultation feedback. Funding of £520,000 was identified for the first phase and a proposal to vire the £390,000 uncommitted balance of the Capital Major Regeneration budget was due to be considered by Council once the public consultation results were available.

The consultation generated 232 responses with 70% in favour of the scheme. A full breakdown of the results was appended to the report with a

full list of written responses. Letters of support were received from a number of local businesses and requests were made to extend the boundary of the scheme to include Church Street. Of the results 72% felt the scheme would create a safe and attractive environment while 70% thought it would make the square safer for pedestrians. Concerns were raised about the impact of the night-time economy on the scheme so proposals were being developed for additional CCTV coverage. The issue of a lack of connectivity between Church Square and the town centre would be addressed during the second phase of the works. Additional disabled parking was requested and would be provided as would short stay car parking for the Tourist Information Centre. Improved lighting and feature lighting would form part of a later phase as would the provision of art work within the Square.

26% of those questioned did not support the proposals. Reasons included Council cuts on supporting services, a lack of value for money and there being either no need to improve the area or greater need to improve other areas in the town.

The Portfolio Holder queried what savings might be achieved in maintenance budgets for the proposed new scheme when compared against the current maintenance budget. The Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) was unable to provide the exact figures but given the newer and more efficient materials which would be used there would certainly be savings. The number of claims for pedestrian's tripping in the vicinity would also be expected to reduce, leading to a reduction in compensation payments. The Portfolio Holder asked that a report for information on potential savings in maintenance and compensation costs be brought to a future Portfolio.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased with the size of the consultation response particularly when compared with similar consultations which the Council had undertaken. He was impressed with the proposals however felt it was not the right time economically to take them forward. He asked that the proposals be put on hold until a more favourable time when he would be happy to support them.

### **Decision**

That the delivery of the first phase of the Church Square Masterplan be deferred until a more economically suitable time.

## **2. Response to the Government Paper: New Challenges – New Chances** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

## **Purpose of report**

To consider the response to the Government paper New Challenges – New Chances.

## **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Government paper New Challenges – New Chances was published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in August 2011 and looks at steps in implementing Further Education reform. A summary of the consultation paper was appended to the report along with a number of consultation questions. The consultation period was due to end on 21<sup>st</sup> October and the proposed responses were appended to the report for the Portfolio Holder's approval.

The Portfolio Holder indicated his support for the proposed responses but had concerns at the uncertainty around funding issues. The Assistant Director (Community Services) advised that the longer term funding uncertainty related to the Minimum Contract Value (MCV) requirements to be implemented from 2012/13 by the Skills Funding Agency, talks were ongoing with other Adult education service providers in neighbouring local Authorities regarding future joint bids. Officers wanted to ensure that any partnership be as equal as possible and that Hartlepool's service delivery and branding would be protected. The Portfolio Holder requested further information on how quality and staffing would be affected by a joint bid. The Assistant Director (Community Services) advised that a report on this was scheduled for the next Portfolio meeting. The Portfolio Holder asked that his thanks be passed on to the staff for their hard work in collating the response.

## **Decision**

That the response to the consultation questions to the New Challenges – New Chances paper be approved.

The meeting concluded at 9:20am.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011**