

# CABINET

## MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

21 November 2011

The meeting commenced at 9.15 am 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).  
Chris Simmons (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),  
Hilary Thompson (Performance Portfolio Holder).

Also Present: Councillor Marjorie James, Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee  
Tracy Shaw,

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  
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources  
Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care  
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services  
Louise Wallace, Assistant Director, Health Improvement  
Catherine Frank, Local Strategic Partnership Manager  
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **151. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Cath Hill (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder) and Peter Jackson (Regeneration and Economic Development and Skills Portfolio Holder).

### **152. Declarations of interest by Members**

The Mayor and Councillors Brash, Payne, Hargreaves, Hall and Simmons declared non-prejudicial interests in Min. No.155.

**153. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011**

Confirmed.

**154. Emergency Planning Joint Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011**

Received.

**155. Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and Compact and Community Grants Pool** (*Assistant Director (Community Services) and Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*)

**Type of decision**

Key Decision (tests i and ii apply). Forward Plan reference numbers: CAS 95/11 Hartlepool Community Pool Grants Review; and RN 96/11 Hartlepool Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and Compact

**Purpose of report**

Over the past few months a number of work-streams relating to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) have been progressed across the Council. The purpose of this report is to bring together those work-streams and to ask Cabinet to agree how to take these forward. The report outlines proposals for the future delivery of the Hartlepool Compact, Voluntary Sector Strategy and the Community Grants Pool. The report also makes reference to the Council's approach to funding the VCS and proposes a review of the Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Transition reported that in light of reduced resources and the developing national government policy it was now felt timely for a more fundamental review of the Voluntary Sector Strategy (VSS) and Compact. In order to ensure clarity at the local level it was proposed to bring the Strategy and Compact together into one document that would clearly set out the relationship between the Local Authority and its public sector partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The new VCS Strategy and Compact would be drafted using the existing documents and the new National Compact as a base.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that he intended to establish a development group from his Portfolio to consider the draft. This development group would include elected members, VCS representatives and HBC officers. The development group would reflect the council's political spectrum and would involve backbench Members. The development group will consider early drafts of the Strategy and Compact prior to the formal consultation process and will consider the responses received through the consultation in the development of the final version. The proposed timetable for the preparation of the new Strategy and Compact is set out in the report and a

draft of the Strategy and Compact would be brought to Cabinet in January for approval as a draft for consultation. A wide-ranging consultation process will then be undertaken over a period of eight-weeks in accordance with the current Compact code for Consultation and Policy.

The Community Grants Pool review began in the current financial year. The intention was to have a revised Community Grants process agreed by December 2011 to allow for the scheme to be prepared and in place for April 2012 at the latest. A number of sources and documents have been drawn up on as part of the review process. This has led to the development of a number of key principles and guidance, set out in detail in the report, and it has been identified that these should inform any change to the criteria for the distribution of the Community Pool.

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) identified the need for its full involvement in the process for the review of the criteria/process for the award of Community Grants Pool. SSC's comments were set out in an appendix to the report and the final proposals were presented to SCC on 11th November 2011. Details of SCC's comments and those of the Tripartite Group were tabled at the meeting. The Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee was present at the meeting and commended the comments to the meeting.

The Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee also commented that in approving the draft Strategy and Compact for consultation, it would appear that Cabinet was approving them before the consultation period commenced. Cabinet Members considered that not to be the case and that any comments from the consultation would be considered fully and changes made where appropriate.

The Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee commented that Members were concerned to ensure that through commissioning, as many services as possible were retained within Hartlepool and provided by Hartlepool providers. The Mayor indicated that it was necessary to ensure that robust procurement arrangements were maintained, though the Council did have an excellent track record of enabling local organisations to submit bids for this type of work. Cabinet supported this view, though the Mayor did state that the Council would need to assure the best services were provided for the money it was spending; local organisations would need to 'step up to the mark' and meet the requirements of the commissioned services.

Cabinet Members also commented that in some cases, the local provider may be the Council itself. Local groups did provide some very excellent services to local people. The challenge for the voluntary sector was to put forward schemes and projects that served the people of Hartlepool. While no guarantees could be given, every effort would be made to retaining the 'Hartlepool pound' within Hartlepool. Once the draft Strategy and Compact were developed, it was felt that SCC's input would be invaluable to the process.

Cabinet Members indicated that the Officers involved in the development of the draft strategy and compact should be congratulated on an excellent piece of work.

#### **Decision**

- (i) That the proposed timetable for the preparation of the new Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and Compact as outlined in appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (ii) That the reduction of the Community Grants Pool budget for 2012/13 by £49,000 to £408,000 be approved to support the bridging of the budget deficit;
- (iii) That the five categories that will form the basis for allocating the Community Grants Pool as identified in report be approved;
- (iv) That the proposal to allocate categories 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Community Grants Pool following a commissioning process be approved with further work to be undertaken to identify the outcomes expected through each category;
- (v) That no individual allocations for the categories be set at this stage but that a further report be submitted to Cabinet once bids had been received for Cabinet to determine how much should be allocated to each category;
- (vi) That further work be undertaken to determine the types of activity that would be supported through category 5 taking into consideration the emerging VCS Strategy and Compact, this work to include how applications in this category would be considered by Grants Committee;
- (vii) That a commissioning approach be established for the Council which is based on the delivery of outcomes that will contribute to the Council's priorities and revise the Sustainable Procurement Strategy to reflect this approach.
- (viii) That the Housing and Transition Portfolio Holder establish a development group of his portfolio with elected members, VCS representatives and Council officers to support the review of the VCS Strategy and Compact.

### **156. Hartlepool Borough Council's Response to Caring for our Future – Shared Ambitions for Care and Support – Consultation** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the recent local consultation exercise on 'Caring for our Future' to inform the White Paper on social care reform in Spring 2012. To request Cabinet's endorsement for the proposed Hartlepool Borough Council response to the Department of Health engagement exercise which requires submission by 2 December 2011. The proposed response was

submitted as an appendix to the report.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder reported that 'Caring for our Future' is an opportunity to bring together the recommendations from the Law Commission and The Commission on the Funding of Care and Support with the Government's Vision for Adult Social Care, and to discuss with stakeholders what the priorities for reform should be.

It had been widely accepted that care and support in England needs to change. Between November 2010 and July 2011 three documents were published: Vision for Adult Social Care, setting out the principles for a modern system of care and support based of personalisation, choice and control for people using services and robust support for carers; the Law Commission's recommendations for simplifying social care law; and The Dilnott Commission on funding of Care and Support.

In October 2011 the Government put in place the 'Caring for our Future' engagement exercise to determine people's views on the best adult social care model for the future. Six areas were identified (Quality, Personalisation, Shaping Local Services, Prevention, Integration, the role of Financial Services, and Reforming the funding of care and support) where Government believes there is the biggest potential to make improvements to the Care and Support System.

Before completing Hartlepool Borough Council's response to the 'Caring for our Future' template, a local consultation exercise was put in place to capture the views of citizens. A questionnaire was compiled that picked up the issues covered in 'Caring for our Future'. The questionnaire was posted on line via the Council's Survey Monkey Consultation tool. The Portfolio Holder indicated that unfortunately the response to the survey was low, with only 18 respondents and the details of the responses were set out in the report.

Cabinet was concerned to ensure that what was being fed back through consultation in Hartlepool was similar to the views coming out of other local authority areas. The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, commented that wide consultation within the Tees valley region and the North East showed similar responses to those reflected within the report. It was also highlighted that a scrutiny investigation into the first version of the government white paper, which included wide consultation, showed very similar responses to those reported.

### **Decision**

That Cabinet endorses the proposed response set out in the report as Hartlepool Borough Council's collective response to the 'Caring for our Future' engagement exercise.

## **157. Proposal for a Hartlepool Hearing Loss Strategy**

*(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To highlight to Cabinet the recommendations of a review that has been undertaken to determine the needs of people living in Hartlepool who are deaf or hard of hearing;

To note that actions are being taken at an operational level to address the recommendations arising from that review; and

To seek support from Cabinet in the preparation of a strategic response to the review through the development of a hearing loss strategy for the Borough.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder reported that hearing loss can have a significant impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. For children who are born with a hearing impairment, their language development, educational attainment and life chances can be affected. For adults with sudden or age-acquired hearing loss, there is the risk of loss of employment, social isolation, depression and mental health problems.

Just over 16% of the population suffer a hearing loss. This amounts to 1 in 6 people or around 14,700 people in the Hartlepool population. This, however, compared with the locally held figures which showed around 1070 people with some level of hearing loss.

In order to better understand the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people, a 'deep-dive' review was undertaken to supplement the wider work of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This review considered the current provision of health and social care services to Hartlepool residents, and made a number of recommendations which, at the present time, are being used to inform the content of the JSNA whilst being taken forward by officers at an operational level.

The review made three strategic and overarching recommendations that had been the subject of further consideration by officers with a view to developing an appropriate response. These were as follows:

- a) To create a visible focal point in the town for people with hearing loss to meet, obtain information and support.
- b) To review the commissioning of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter services and consider the value of redesigning these in consultation with other partners across Teesside and with members drawn from the Deaf community.
- c) To develop a strategic approach to the engagement of people from the Deaf and hard of hearing communities, enabling them to be fully

involved in decisions and changes to services that affect them.

Work had already begun to respond to the recommendations of the recent review, and the planned future engagement with the Deaf community, there was an ideal opportunity for Cabinet to build still further on this work and consider the production of a hearing loss strategy for Hartlepool.

The Assistant Director, Health Improvement introduced Tracey Sharp, Deputy Regional Director, Public Health Delivery, Public Health North East who had been involved in the development of the strategy. Tracey Sharp highlighted that the production of a hearing loss strategy for Hartlepool was likely to be one of the first, if not the first, Local Authority to respond to the challenge that hearing loss presents its local community and would be an exemplar in doing so. It would also demonstrate its commitment to working with and being responsive to the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people in Hartlepool and provide focus and strategic direction for its officers in responding to the future needs of a significant group of Hartlepool residents across their life course.

Cabinet noted that there had been a deaf centre in Hartlepool up until recently and now this report was suggesting that a new centre was needed. There was also an element of the report that suggested that there was a preventative aspect to the strategy. The Deputy Regional Director indicated that most hearing loss was due to aging, though studies did show that if early intervention was not sought, hearing loss would occur to the extent that it could not be regained through hearing aids. There was also the issue of young people listening to MP£ players at too high volumes, as well as bars, night clubs and live music events being too loud.

Cabinet acknowledged that for profoundly deaf people, British Sign Language (BSL) was their first language, not English, and there wasn't always the number of people available with the necessary BSL skill levels to assist deaf people when they came into contact with various agencies, such as councils.

In relation to some of the figures for the identification of people in various age groups with hearing loss, the Deputy Regional Director indicated that some of the figures had to be extrapolated from a combination of NHS and national statistics. The departments in local hospitals would probably say that the figures were higher than some of the national statistics. The new born baby hearing screening that was introduced in 2006 had led to early interventions and reliable statistics.

A Cabinet Members suggested that such a piece of work deserved a high profile launch to highlight the depth of research and work undertaken and that this was likely to be the first such strategy in the country. This was supported by Cabinet. The Mayor commented that while the recommendations focussed on the profoundly deaf and those that use BSL, with such high levels of people with hearing loss within the community that don't understand/use BSL, the strategy needed to mean something to all

people with hearing loss.

### **Decision**

1. That the content of the review and the response set out in the report be noted, and the development of a draft 'Hartlepool Hearing Loss Strategy' for further consideration at a future Cabinet meeting be approved.
2. Cabinet notes and thanks Tracey Sharp, Deputy Regional Director, Public Health Delivery, Public Health North East for her contribution.

## **158. Local Asset Backed Vehicles** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report is to advise Cabinet of the outcome of initial options appraisal work undertaken to determine the viability and appropriateness of creating an Asset backed Vehicle to facilitate development in Hartlepool.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder reported that consideration had been given to the creation of an Asset Backed Vehicle; a Public Private Partnership arrangement designed to encourage the parties to pool resources including finance, planning powers, land buildings and experience in order to maximise output both in terms of capital receipts and sustainable development across a range of sites in the town.

An opportunity, associated with work previously undertaken by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme, was taken to jointly commission a study within Stockton Council into the potential of an Asset Backed Vehicle which would look at individual and joint options for such a vehicle. Specialist consultants Jones Lang Lasalle had reviewed the Council's and Stockton's portfolio to determine whether there was sufficient development potential to attract a suitable development partner. This option would also increase viability as set up costs would be shared.

Subsequent to the study Stockton had decided to pursue an alternative contractual Joint Venture independently. Although the Council had a number of attractive development sites that would be of interest it is considered that the potential was marginal and there would be a need to increase the scale of opportunities to be successful.

The potential development of an Asset Back Vehicle also needed to be considered against the overall financial position of the Council. In particular the need to achieved capital receipts of £4.5m over the next three years to address the forecast shortfall in funding for one-off strategic costs, which



include anticipated redundancy/early retirement costs and Housing Market Renewal commitments. As a result it was currently considered that an Asset Backed Vehicle was not viable for Hartlepool on an individual basis but this may alter in the future as more sophisticated arrangements develop that are pre-procured, cheaper and more flexible.

Cabinet considered that the authority needed to maintain a flexible approach particularly in the buying and selling of land and property to address the budget strategy. The Mayor commented that while a town wide asset backed vehicle was not viable, the maintenance of a flexible approach to its capital strategy.

### **Decision**

1. That although an Asset Backed Vehicle had distinct potential advantages, the cost, risks and timescale associated with procurement were not viable in relation to size of portfolio and delivery timescales.
2. That the continued flexible approach to land and property disposals/development be continued using a range of both traditional disposal arrangements and contractual joint ventures to facilitate regeneration and the generation of capital receipts on a case by case basis to achieve the resources needed to meet one-off strategic costs identified in the MTFS.
3. That the potential for an Asset Backed Vehicle be revisited should a future business case come forward.

## **159. Annual Report of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board 2010-2011** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the publication of the Annual Report of Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board that reports on the effectiveness of children's safeguarding in the local area.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder reported main annual report, gave detailed information from the various areas of work and analysis of the management statistics. This was supported by a summary document which is more public facing and outlines the headlines from the main report.

In the foreword to the report, the Chair of the Board commended member agencies for their hard work during the year when most of the targets set by the Board had been achieved and three major pieces of work having been completed. The findings of these major pieces of work form the basis for the work plan of the forthcoming year which were contained in the Business Plan for 2011-2012 detailed near the end of the annual report.

Cabinet questioned whether the various numbers of boards and committees needed to be rationalised to free resources to be reinvested. The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care commented that many of the groups met only when needed, such as the Serious Case Review Board. There was constant review to ensure the service worked more efficiently and one such proposal was to combine the Communications Committee for the child and adults services.

The report indicated that there had been a reduction in the number of children subject to protection orders yet anecdotally the view was slightly different. The Assistant Director indicated that there was a lot of early intervention work being undertaken to avoid the need for higher levels of support. It was also noted that the priorities didn't include work with schools. The Assistant Director commented that the local board included representatives from the NHS, PCT and education. Best practice was shared across the Tees valley and the north east region on a regular basis.

#### **Decision**

That the Annual Report of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board 2010-2011 be received.

### **160. Quarter 2 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2011/12** *(Corporate Management Team)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the progress made against the Council's 2011/12 Corporate and Departmental Plans, for the period ending 30 September 2011.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Performance Portfolio Holder reported that across the three departmental plans there were 169 actions and 51 performance indicators that had targets set and monitored on a quarterly basis. Overall progress was good with over 90% of actions either already completed or expected to be achieved. 80% of performance indicators had either already reached their targets or were expected to do so.

There were nine actions which had been assessed as requiring intervention or marked as no longer being possible to complete. Three performance indicators had also been highlighted as requiring intervention and these were set out in the report.

There had been 87 risks identified across the council that were being managed within the Council's Risk Management Framework and these were updated within the report.

Departmental plans were also monitored and officers comments on the progress made within the first six months of the year were set out including details of key achievements.

The action flagged up as 'not completed' was RND11/12- JE08 "Achieve sub contracting arrangements under the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Work Programme with Prime providers" and Cabinet was asked to agree that this action is removed from the Departmental Plan and not included in future reports.

The Mayor questioned if there was anything within the report that raised concern. The Portfolio Holder indicated that action RND11/12-CS02 "Produce in conjunction with partners, an action plan which will aim to deliver a multi agency response to tackling domestic abuse" had not been produced due to staffing issues which were being resolved.

It was noted that work to increase the uptake of free school meals had had an adverse affect on CEDFI P004 "Average time to process new Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit claims" where the quarter 1 outturn was 31.88 days against the target of 20 days. With all the changes that were currently happening within the division and also on the horizon due to changes in legislation it had to be acknowledged that that only so much could be done to reduce costs within an area that served the most needy within the town.

#### **Decision**

1. That the current position with regard to performance be noted.
2. That the proposed date changes to the actions included in para. 5.3 and para. 6.3 of the report be approved.
3. That the removal of action RND11/12- JE08 as detailed in para. 5.4 of the report be agreed.

## **161. Hartlepool Partnership Plan Quarter 2 (2011/12) Summary of Performance** *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To update Cabinet on performance against the Hartlepool Partnership Plan for 2011/12 at the end of quarter 2, September 2011.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Mayor reported that at the end of September 2011 good progress was being made in delivering the outcomes of the Hartlepool Partnership Plan. For 2011/12 there are 41 PIs with targets set. A number of targets had been achieved or were on track to achieve. The report was based on quarter 2 return information from the end of September 2011.

Within the previous report 'Quarter 2 – Council Overview of Performance

and Risk 2011/12' a number of requests for date changes to actions were approved. As the Hartlepool Partnership Plan was aligned with the Departmental and Corporate Plans a number of those actions were also included within this action plan and those date changes would also be updated within the Partnership Plan. In addition, the removal of a PI and action within outcome 15 'Hartlepool has an improved natural and built environment' had been received and Cabinet was requested to agree to its removal and that it not be included in future reports.

**Decision**

1. That the current position with regard to performance on the Hartlepool Partnership Plan 2011/12 be noted;
2. That the removal of PI RND P054 and action HPP11/12 - EN01 as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 a.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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