

REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

16 December 2011

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

Present:

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

Officers: Anthony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Maggie Heaps, Adult Education Co-ordinator
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

3. Economic Regeneration Strategy *(Assistant Director (Planning and Regeneration))*

Type of decision

Non-Key

Purpose of report

To report on the development of the first draft of the new Hartlepool Regeneration Strategy (ERS) and Action Plan and seek comments as part of the consultation process

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning had apologised but was unable to attend the meeting due to a conflicting appointment and the Economic Development Manager presented the report which provided a brief outline of the Economic Regeneration and Action Plan, including the vision, aims and objectives. Information was also given on the consultation process and sustainability appraisal. A copy of the first draft was appended to the report. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Strategy and Action Plan would be revised as a result of the responses received during the consultation process and a final draft would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder in February 2012.

The Employment Development Officer indicated that a positive response to the Strategy and Action Plan had been received from stakeholders who had

endorsed the document. A further analysis had been carried out on the targets for 2021 in relation to the employment rate to ensure they were achievable, realistic and ambitious. The target of 70% was considered appropriate due to an increase in apprenticeship opportunities, the introduction of enterprise zones, development of the offshore wind industry in the area and funding opportunities via the regional growth fund. The Portfolio Holder commented that there was a big skills gap in engineering and welcomed the opportunities for apprenticeships along with challenging yet realistic targets.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to note the involvement of the business sector, the education and skills sector and everyone from the Economic Forum in the development of this Strategy and Action Plan.

Decision

The first draft of the ERS and Action Plan and the Portfolio Holder commented above be noted, prior to the submission of the final draft to the Portfolio Holder in February 2012.

4. Adult Education Service Plan 2011-2012 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the annual plan for the Adult Education service for the current Academic year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Adult Education Service Plan outlined the priorities for the Adult Education service for the next academic year. This was based on the grant funding allocation of £1m provided by the Skills Funding Agency and if the service reached the agreed targets then there were no implications for a shortfall in income. A copy of the full plan was appended to the report. The main priorities for the academic year 2011-2012 and financial implications should the SFA targets not be reached were detailed in the report.

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the comprehensive nature of the plan and in particular, the targeted areas of training for young people and people out of work as this complimented work being undertaken elsewhere within the Council. The Employment Development Officer confirmed that the Economic Development Team would link with employers to assist with targeting deprived wards. The Adult Education Co-ordinator informed the

Portfolio Holder that funding had been acquired to recruit 31 apprentices within the last year and it was hoped that this would continue at a similar rate of growth. The Portfolio Holder commented that he was very pleased with the service plan and the progress made in tackling the provision of training and employment opportunities.

Decision

The report was noted and the Adult Education Service Plan for 2011-2012 was noted.

5. Update on the current enrolments of the Adult Education Service *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the current situation with enrolments for the current Academic year in the Adult Education service.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Adult Education Service received funding through grants from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). These grants were conditional upon the service reaching targets for the recruitment of learners and their subsequent success. Learners were expected to pay tuition fees, usually 50% of the total unless the learner falls within the listed fee remission category. Figures taken since 2009/10 showed an increase in the number of enrolments, specifically skills based courses. There had also been an apparent decrease in overall fee remission following changes to SFA policy.

The Adult Education Co-ordinator confirmed that the skills targets have an income target which was capped, once it was reached no further income could be received. The Portfolio Holder commented that despite the difficult economic climate, the service appeared to be punching above its weight through the hard work and commitment of the staff to ensure the right training was delivered. The Adult Education Co-ordinator confirmed that there more new apprentices commencing in January 2012.

The Portfolio Holder was encouraged by the success of the Adult Education Service and suggested that such a good news story should be publicised through the Press Office, possibly through an article in a forthcoming edition of Hartbeat.

Decision

The report was noted.

6. OFSTED Monitoring visit of the Adult Education Service *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the recent OFSTED Monitoring visit of the Adult Education Service.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

OFSTED had carried out a monitoring visit of the Adult Education service in October 2011. They had concentrated on six themes, two of which were mandatory. Following the visit, a report was published which was appended for the Portfolio Holder's attention. Overall the Service had achieved significant progress in three themes and reasonable progress in three themes.

The Adult Education Co-ordinator highlighted the comments received in relation to the impact the recent move in premises to Tower Street had on learners. It was noted that the Inspectors considered that the new premises in the centre of the town had played a significant role in the improvement of the service as it was highly accessible and visible. The location provided a focal point dedicated to the service's provision as well as being close to key referral agencies such as Job Centre Plus. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the inspector's comments in relation to the location of the service and the importance of the location in the improvement of service provision.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to receive such a good inspection report and suggested that this should be highlighted as a good news story for the Council through the Press Office.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 9.24 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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