

REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD Monday 13 February 2012

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: Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
Mick Emerson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Business)
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Rob Smith, Senior Regeneration Officer
Maggie Heaps, Adult Education Coordinator
Vicky Bosley, Democratic Services Officer

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

Type of decision

Key Decision RN 103/11 test (ii) applies

Purpose of report

To report to the Portfolio Holder on the revisions to the new Hartlepool Economic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, as a result of the consultation process and to seek comments and approval on the final draft, prior to publication.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Employment Development Officer provided a brief outline of the Economic Regeneration Strategy (ERS) and Action Plan and gave an update on the revisions made to both documents following a consultation with key stakeholders. It was reported that the ERS covers a ten year period of 2011-2021. The five high level strategic objectives of the ERS were:

- (i) To improve business growth and business infrastructure and enhance a culture of entrepreneurship
- (ii) To attract new investment and develop major programmes to regenerate the area and improve connectivity
- (iii) To increase employment and skills levels and develop a competitive workforce that meets the demands of employers and the economy
- (iv) To increase the economic inclusion of adults, tackle financial exclusion and reduce the proportion of children in poverty
- (v) To boost the visitor economy

The Hartlepool's ERS had been developed in consultation with key partners and in June 2011 three workshops facilitated by Durham University Business School (DUBS) were delivered on Housing and Spatial Regeneration, Employability and Skills and Business and Tourism. Comments and feedback received within the workshops had been used to formulate the ERS and Action Plan. The Employment Development Officer confirmed that Economic Development would be working closely with the National apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Hartlepool Jobcentre Plus (JCP) in order to formulate a process and to see what could be offered.

The Employment Development Officer informed the Portfolio Holder that he was confident targets could be achieved providing the right economic conditions were in place. The Portfolio Holder highlighted the importance of raising the awareness of the ERS, thanked the team involved and appreciated the effort put in; he also commented on how pleased he was with the final document.

Decision

That the Portfolio Holder approved the proposed final draft of the new Hartlepool Economic Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, for publication.

11. Crown House Managed Workspace Feasibility Results *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to inform the Portfolio Holder of the findings of the Crown House Managed Workspace Feasibility Study and to seek endorsement of the Action Plan and proposed next steps in the development of the scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Senior Regeneration Officer provided details of the aims and background of the scheme and a summary of the main findings of the feasibility study; including the results of the financial analysis, assessment of demand and analysis of potential delivery models. The Senior Regeneration Officer also reported a number of actions which had been prepared in order to guide the development of the project. The Crown House site on Surtees Street had been identified as a suitable location for the development of a managed workspace facility for new and expanding Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's). The aim of the proposed managed workspace was to encourage business start-up and SME growth in order to raise Hartlepool's enterprise formation rates to national levels. The project offered the opportunity to capitalise on the strengths of both Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) and Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD), through the retention of creative talent and support for graduates so that they can develop successful private sector businesses and jobs in Hartlepool.

The Senior Regeneration Officer reported that three options, regarding the financial aspects as detailed within the report, had been examined and confirmed that sourcing alternative capital contributions to reduce the level of prudential borrowing that would be required was the most suitable way forward. Also that it was important to consider the impact on the Innovation Centre and Hartlepool Enterprise Centre. The Portfolio Holder agreed that he did not want to be in competition with these centres. The Economic Development Manager estimated the delivery time would be three years and confirmed that the Innovation Centre is healthily let at 60%. The Portfolio Holder confirmed he was excited to work with HCFE and CCAD, to assist people to start new businesses within Hartlepool.

Decision

That the Portfolio Holder noted the findings of the Crown House Managed Workspace Feasibility Study and endorsed the action plan prepared to guide the next steps in the development of the project.

12. Buy Local Campaign (*Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*)

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To provide an update in respect of Hartlepool's Buy Local Campaign and proposals for its ongoing development.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Principal Economic Development Officer (Business) updated the Portfolio Holder on the background and developments to date, in respect of the campaign and highlighted the proposals in order to improve the scope of the campaign. The Principal Economic Development Officer (Business) reported that the Buy Local campaign started January 2009 when the last economic downturn had a detrimental effect across businesses in Hartlepool. Both the indoor and outdoor market had previously used the Buy Local campaign for support. It was confirmed that Hartlepool Mail would lead on the retailer/consumer aspect of the campaign, the Council's Economic Development Unit would concentrate on the business aspects of the campaign and the Federation of Small Businesses would look to develop a series of special offers, such as professional services in order to support local start up businesses.

The Portfolio Holder commented that it was encouraging to see the partners integrating in Hartlepool for the Buy Local campaign. Concerns were raised by the Portfolio Holder, regarding the importance of advertising the campaign and any shortfalls in the budget, which may occur. The Portfolio Holder asked the Principal Economic Development Manager to report any budget shortfalls to him, to allow further consideration from Cabinet or the Mayor.

Decision

That the Portfolio Holder noted the overall progress of the "Buy Local" campaign and approved the proposed partnering arrangements.

13. Skills Support for the Unemployed *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To inform the portfolio holder of the opportunity to tender for the European Social Fund (ESF) bid for Skills Support for the unemployed and other bids in the North East.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Adult Education Coordinator reported that in late November 2011 the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) launched a new round of tendering opportunities for European Social Fund (ESF). Three tendering opportunities had been launched for:

- (i) Skills Support for the Unemployed
- (ii) Response to Redundancy
- (iii) Work Place Learning

It was confirmed by the Adult Education Coordinator that after much discussion, it was agreed that all twelve Local Authority Adult Education Services across the North East would be regional partners for all three bids. It was further agreed that North Tyneside would lead on 'Response to Redundancy', Gateshead would lead on 'Work place Learning' and Hartlepool would lead on the 'Skills Support for the Unemployed'. The Skills support for the Unemployed was designed to give unemployed adults support and training to assist them in gaining employment. The total targets for the project were shown in table 1, included in the report. Targets would be allocated to each Local Authority based on the unemployment figures for their area. The total amount allocated in the bid was £13.2 million over a three year period. A grant of £1,500.00 would be available for each employer who employed additional apprentices as part of the project. The Portfolio Holder commented on the fantastic work which had been carried out and questioned, if we had been successful, when would we be informed. The Adult Education Coordinator confirmed that bids were expected to be announced in February 2012 and would hopefully have an update for the next Portfolio, as the project would commence April 2012 and would continue until July 2015.

Decision

That the Portfolio Holder noted the report and approved the submission of the tender to coordinate the project.

The meeting concluded at: 9.35am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 17 February 2012