

# **REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA**



**Thursday 13 July**

**at 10.00am**

**in Committee Room B**

**MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:**

Councillors R Cook, S Cook, Coward, Cranney, Gibbon, London, A Marshall,  
J Marshall, Richardson, Wallace and Wright.

**Resident Representatives:**

James Atkinson, Mary Power and Iris Ryder

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

**3. MINUTES**

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2006

**4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE  
COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA  
SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items.

**6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY  
FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items.

**7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's 'Railway Approaches' – Scoping Report  
(*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

**8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of Next Meeting Thursday 17 August 2006, commencing at 10.00am in Committee Room B.**

# **REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

16 June 2006

### **Present:**

Councillor: Stephen Wallace (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Shaun Cook, Steve Gibbon, Ann Marshall  
and Carl Richardson.

Resident Representative: Iris Ryder

Also present: Councillor Gordon Henery as substitute for Councillor Edna Wright in  
accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 (ii).

Officers: Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager  
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Jonathan Wistow, Scrutiny Support Officer

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Coward and Edna Wright and resident representative James Atkinson.

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

None.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2006**

Confirmed.

### **4. Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair, Councillor Steve Wallace welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Scrutiny Forum in the new Municipal Year and his first meeting as Chair of the Forum. Councillor Wallace welcomed those newly appointed and newly elected Councillors to the Forum.

**5. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum**

None.

**6. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None.

**7. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

None.

**8. The Role of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a brief report outlining the background to the approach to overview and scrutiny in the Council. The key roles of Scrutiny were detailed as:

- Policy development and review
- Holding the Executive to account
- Investigating issues of local concern

The role of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee was set out with a detailed description of the role and functions of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum. The report highlighted that the strategic direction of the Scrutiny Forums was to assess, monitor and advise on the Council's progress towards the seven priority aims. The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's remit was specifically to consider issues relating to the Community Strategy, building control, development control, economic development, landscape and conservation, strategic housing and community safety. A schedule of the Forum's meetings dates was also set out in the report.

**Recommendation**

That the report be noted.

**9. Determining the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's Work Programme for 2006/07** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum needs to develop a

Work Programme for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, together with a timeframe for each review, for consideration by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on the 30 June 2006. Detailed terms of reference should be developed at the start of each inquiry. The Director for Regeneration and Planning Services; Cabinet Member for, Regeneration, Liveability and Housing; Local Public Service Agreement Two (LPSA2); Corporate Performance Plan (BVPP); and the Viewpoint Surveys had been the foundation sources for the report to enable the Forum to compile its Work Programme.

From those sources and Members previous comments, the following list of potential subjects for investigation had been identified: -

Neighbourhood Element Funding  
Railway Approaches  
Maritime Tourism  
CCTV 'pros' and 'cons'.

In setting the Work Programme for 2006/07, Members were advised that consideration would also need to be given to Budget and Policy Framework documents as and when required and six Monthly Review reports on former scrutiny investigations, which would be presented to the Forum during the course of the year. The six monthly progress report on the Partnerships Scrutiny Investigation would be presented to the meeting in December 2006.

The Forum was also advised to be cautious in setting an overly ambitious Work Programme for which it may be unable to deliver and the Scrutiny Support Officer recommended that only two issues should be listed for investigation at this time. This approach had proved very successful in the previous municipal year. The Forum could revisit the potential list of investigations should time allow later in the municipal year.

Members debated the issues they would wish to see investigated by the Forum and after a vote of Members preferences agreed that the two issues they would wish to scrutinise were Railway Approaches and Youth Unemployment. Members commented that they would wish to investigate Neighbourhood Element Funding should time allow as this had been referred to them by Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

#### **Recommendation**

That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be advised that this Forum wished to investigate Railway Approaches and Youth Unemployment in 2006/07.

STEPHEN WALLACE

CHAIRMAN

## **REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

13 July 2006



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's 'Railway Approaches' – Scoping Report

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To make proposals to Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum for their forthcoming investigation into Hartlepool's 'Railway Approaches'.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 20 April 2006 the Forum suggested that the 'entrance into Hartlepool by train from both South and North' could be explored in detail during the 2006/7 Municipal Year. Furthermore, at a meeting to suggest potential scrutiny items for this Municipal Year between the Chair of this Forum, the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, and the Mayor (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing) the issue of 'Railway Approaches' was again suggested as a Scrutiny topic. Subsequently, on 16 June 2006 Members of this Forum selected this topic as one of its two main Scrutiny investigations for the year.
- 2.2 From Members comments at this Forum's meetings on 20 April and 16 June a number of key issues have emerged in relation to this inquiry that the Forum may wish to choose to explore in more detail:
- (a) Condition of the railway verges;
  - (b) Development sites, derelict land/buildings, and landscaping;
  - (c) The condition of Hartlepool Station given its role as part of the new Transport Interchange; and

- (d) Impact of railway approaches on the continued regeneration of the town.
- 2.3 The key issues highlighted above have been further developed through the proposed terms of reference for this inquiry in section 4 of this report.
- 2.4 In developing the draft terms of reference for this inquiry Members may find it useful to consider some brief background information in relation to the following:
  - (a) Office of Rail Regulation;
  - (b) Network Rail;
  - (c) Northern Rail
  - (d) Grand Central; and
  - (e) Hartlepool Borough Council.
- 2.5 **Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)** - Following privatisation, British Rail was divided into two main elements. The first element consists of the national rail network (track, signalling, bridges, tunnels, stations and depots) and the second being the operating companies whose trains run on that network. In simple regulatory terms, ORR is responsible for regulating the national rail network operator (Network Rail), while the Department for Transport looks after passenger and train-related matters.
- 2.6 Network Rail is a private sector monopoly owner and operator of a national asset of considerable public importance and as such is accountable to the public interest. It is, therefore, unable to operate, maintain and develop that asset according to purely commercial criteria, and is subject to regulation in a number of ways, primarily by the independent ORR. ORR's principal function is to regulate Network Rail's stewardship of the national rail network.
- 2.7 **Network Rail** - The national rail network infrastructure (track, signalling, bridges, tunnels and stations) is owned and operated by Network Rail. As such, Network Rail is a key organisation in terms of the railway approaches into Hartlepool. Consequently, sections 2.8 to 2.10 include some background information for Members in relation to Network Rail's approach to graffiti, litter and fly-tipping. Members should have the opportunity to question Network Rail about these issues later in the inquiry.
- 2.8 Network Rail states on its website that they are committed to removing all graffiti on the railway as quickly as they can. They prioritise the work in the following order:
  - (a) Graffiti that impacts on safety (e.g. graffiti on signs);
  - (b) Offensive, racist and sexist graffiti;
  - (c) Graffiti that can be seen by passengers and the general public;

- (d) Graffiti on railway routes, including location cabinets, sub-stations and relay rooms; and
- (e) Other graffiti as resources allow - with priority given to large amounts of graffiti or graffiti that has been there for a long time.

2.9 In addition, Network Rail use a number of different approaches to prevent graffiti depending on the needs of the local area:

- (a) Funding partnerships with local authorities – sometimes they pay local authorities to remove graffiti on their structures. Because local authorities have their own graffiti-removal teams, they can often tackle problems faster and more cheaply than Network Rail can. This approach has worked very well in several London local authorities;
- (b) Multi-party initiatives – Network Rail brings together the British Transport Police, local police forces, youth-offending teams, train operating companies with local authorities and its own teams to tackle the problem. Network Rail use education, crime reduction, alternative activities for young people, publicity and cleansing as well as legal action to prevent graffiti;
- (c) Intelligence-gathering on offenders – using cameras and daily checking to identify and monitor offenders so that they can be prosecuted; and
- (d) Anti-graffiti technologies – including using non-stick, textured and graffiti-resistant paints, encouraging plants and trees to cover surfaces (where safe), improving fences and removing redundant buildings.

2.10 Network Rail also outlines its approach to litter and fly-tipping on its website. Network Rail and some of the train operating companies have a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to remove litter from the railway. They prioritise work based on safety, not appearance. In practice, it is impossible to achieve a completely clean railway but Network Rail tries to prevent litter and fly-tipping as much as it can by:

- (a) Working with the British Transport Police to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute people who commit litter and fly-tipping offences on railway property;
- (b) Maintaining good security to stop people illegally accessing railway sites;
- (c) Using CCTV to monitor sites where people commit fly-tipping;
- (d) Using “nobbler” which puncture tyres both inside and outside access gates for railway land;



- (e) Including litter removal in its vegetation management projects;
  - (f) Enforcing legal agreements so that its tenants (e.g. shops at the stations that we manage) do not cause any litter problems; and
  - (g) Requiring that all litter, debris and other materials are removed from our sites by contractors when they have finished a job.
- 2.11 **Northern Rail – Train Operator** - Network Rail owns all the railway stations in the country. However, with the exception of a number of ‘principal’ stations, which it operates itself, Network Rail leases the stations to whichever train operator is the principal user. The principal train operator in Hartlepool is Northern Rail.
- 2.12 Members may wish to explore the condition of Hartlepool station during the inquiry. In addition, the Forum may want to consult with the main train operator about the railway approaches into Hartlepool given their frequent journeys into and out of the town. It may also be possible to seek their views about the approaches into Hartlepool in comparison to other towns they provide services to.
- 2.13 **Grand Central** – Grand Central has recently been given permission by the ORR to operate train services from Sunderland to London, which will include trains stopping in Hartlepool. Working closely with Network Rail, Grand Central states it will deliver tangible improvements for passengers by the provision of new direct services. These new journey opportunities will attract many new passengers to the network for the benefit of the local communities and the whole industry. Consequently, during the inquiry Members may wish to consider in more detail Grand Central’s views on how the station areas / approaches can be enhanced as a gateway into Hartlepool.
- 2.14 **Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC)** - There are three areas in which HBC exercises responsibilities, which may have some bearing on the Forum’s investigation into railway approaches. These are:
- (a) **Image of the town** – from a regeneration perspective the image of Hartlepool is particularly important in terms of attracting visitors, businesses and jobseekers to the town. The railway approaches into Hartlepool play an important role in terms of the initial impression they create of the town for visitors. Consequently, Members may wish to consider what can be done to maximise the ‘good’ views on the approaches into the town and minimise the impact of those views which create a negative impression of the town. In addition, the introduction of the Grand Central rail link (which is due to start operating in January 2007) will increase the profile of Hartlepool, whilst drawing further attention to the railway approaches into the town.
  - (b) **Planning and Development Control** – the adopted Local Plan has a number of policies that are relevant to this issue. Objective C4 of the adopted Hartlepool Local Plan 2006 seeks to encourage a high standard

of design and the provision of high quality environment in all developments and particularly those on prominent sites, along the main road and rail corridors and along the coast. The supporting text emphasises that it is important that a good first impression is given to potential investors and tourists and other visitors to the town travelling along the main roads and the railway. Consequently General Environmental Principles Policy GEP7 requires a particular high standard of design to improve the visual environment along, amongst other locations, the Middlesbrough - Newcastle Railway line. The Local Plan also includes a number of policies relating to untidy sites and environmental improvements and the need to consider the visual appearance of the main approaches including the railway line. In addition, Hartlepool Railway Station is located within the Church Street Conservation Area which is subject to policies which seek to enhance the area (Policy HE1). Adjacent land parcels are subject to a variety of policies and land allocations. Some areas are subject to regulations to enforce planning conditions and other environmental controls. Members may wish to consider these issues in more detail over the course of the Scrutiny investigation.

- (c) **Local Transport Plan (LTP)** – rail has an increasingly important role to play in tackling congestion and supporting Hartlepool's continued economic growth and prosperity. The combined annual number of rail passenger journeys to/from Hartlepool has increased by 28% between 2001/02 and 2004/05. It is anticipated that the introduction of direct rail services to York and London by Grand Central will increase rail patronage further. Through the LTP, the Council has worked in partnership with Network Rail and Northern Rail to design improved facilities at Hartlepool and Seaton Carew rail stations. The Hartlepool Transport Interchange project will provide a 'multi-modal' interchange adjacent to Hartlepool railway station. A wide range of improvements will be undertaken as part of this project, such as changes to waiting room and ticket office facilities, new toilet facilities, new counter, new retail units and a pedestrian walkway linking the interchange to the railway station. In summary there are two key issues in relation to the LTP, which are improvements to rail facilities and the access to these facilities. Members may wish to explore developments in relation to the LTP in more detail over the course of the inquiry.

### 3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To examine the railway approaches into Hartlepool and develop suggestions for improvement.

#### **4. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the review are proposed:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of key government policy areas relating to 'Railway Approaches';
- (b) To explore the railway approaches into the town from the north and the south;
- (c) To explore the condition of Hartlepool and Seaton Carew railway stations;
- (d) To identify key 'problem spots' and areas of good practice on the railway approaches into the town;
- (e) To identify the ownership of key problem spots i.e. is the land privately owned, owned by the Council, owned by Network Rail, or owned by another body;
- (f) To consider the impact of the railway approaches into Hartlepool on the town's image, particularly in terms of the ongoing regeneration of the town;
- (g) To gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in Hartlepool who have some responsibility for the appearance of the railway approaches into the town (i.e. commercial operator(s), regulators, private landowners, and the Council);
- (h) To consider issues of accessibility, particularly in terms of pedestrian access to Hartlepool Station from the Marina;
- (i) To compare what good practice exists in another Local Authority in relation to railway approaches; and
- (j) To seek the views of the public in relation to the railway approaches into Hartlepool

#### **5. POTENTIAL AREAS OF INQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE**

5.1 Members of the Forum can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny review.

5.2 The Forum can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the development of a balanced and focused range of recommendations. Members may wish to include the following in their investigation:-

- (a) Representative from Network Rail;
- (b) Representative from the Office of Rail Regulation;
- (c) Representative from Northern Rail;
- (d) Member of Parliament for Hartlepool;
- (e) Elected Mayor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Housing and Liveability;
- (f) Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Transportation;
- (g) Representatives from the Regeneration and Planning Services and Neighbourhood Services Departments;
- (h) Representatives from the Economic Forum;
- (i) Private landowners;
- (j) Representative from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit;
- (k) Representative from One North-East;
- (l) Local residents / train users / rail user groups; and
- (m) Ward Councillors.

5.3 As part of this investigation, arrangements can be made for the Forum to explore the rail approaches from the north and south of the town together with a visit to Hartlepool station.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

6.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and paragraph 5.2, details who the Forum could involve. However, thought will need to be given to the way in which the Forum wishes to encourage those views.

## **7. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 7.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken, which may be changed at any stage:-

### **13 July 2006 – ‘Scoping and Setting the Scene of the Scrutiny of the Topic’**

Late July / early August Site Visit to be arranged – North and South Railway Approaches

17 August 2006 – ‘Setting the Scene’ report / presentation from Council Officers

Feedback from the Site Visit.

Possibly include key evidence from the Regeneration, Liveability and Housing and Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holders.

29 September 2006 – Evidence from key witnesses / outside bodies:

- (a) MP for Hartlepool (Iain Wright);
- (b) Network Rail;
- (c) Office of Rail Regulators (ORR);
- (d) Grand Central; and
- (e) Northern Rail.

2 November 2006 – Public involvement session, seek the views of the public and rail user groups on their perceptions of railway approaches into Hartlepool.

Mid to Late November – schedule an informal meeting of the Forum to consider contents of a Draft Final Report.

7 December 2006 – Agree Draft Final Report.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 Members are recommended to agree the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum’s remit for the Scrutiny investigation as outlined in section 4 of this report.

**Contact Officer:-** Jonathan Wistow – Scrutiny Support Officer  
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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) North East Regional Planning Assessment for the Railway – Department of Transport March 2006.

In addition, the following websites have been used for background information in the preparation of this report:

- (i) Office of Rail Regulation: [www.rail-reg.gov.uk](http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk)
- (ii) Department of Transport: [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)
- (iii) Network Rail: [www.networkrail.co.uk](http://www.networkrail.co.uk)
- (iv) Grand Central: [www.grandcentralrail.com](http://www.grandcentralrail.com)