

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

30 April 2012

The meeting commenced at 9.15 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Hilary Thompson (Performance and Adults and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder),

Also Present: Councillors Christopher Akers Belcher, Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, Stephen Thomas, Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum and Jane Shaw, Chair of Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum.

Ashleigh Bostock, Robyn Reid, Hannah Bew and Helen Lamb
Young People's Representatives, Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Officers: Nicola Bailey, Acting Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Julian Heward, Public Relations Officer
Juliette Ward, Participation Youth Worker
Elaine Hind, Scrutiny Support Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

286. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Cath Hill, Culture, Leisure and Tourism and Children's Services Portfolio Holder.

287. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Hilary Thompson declared a personal interest in Minutes 293 and 294.

288. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2012

Received.

289. Final Report – Young People’s Access to Transport *(Young People’s Representatives, Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present the final report of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum’s Young People’s Representatives following their investigation into ‘Young People’s Access to Transport.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Young People’s representatives from Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum presented the final report following the Forum’s investigation into Young People’s Access to Transport which provided details of the process, findings, conclusions, together with subsequent recommendations. The young people, as representatives of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum, had been given the opportunity to choose a topic that they were interested in and to lead on their own investigation. It was decided that the investigation would focus on what transport was available across the town that young people could access at night, examine the transport times, areas and costs covering all positive and negative aspects.

The Mayor thanked the young people for an excellent report and sought clarification as to whether Stagecoach had been approached direct as part of the investigation on the possibility of reintroducing services in the town. The Participation Youth Worker advised that discussions had taken place with the Transport Manager with a view to pursuing this option.

With regard to recommendation (i) to seek Cabinet’s view in relation to the continuation of work relating to the reinstatement/redevelopment of bus services and/or alternative travel arrangements, where the implementation of recommendations require additional resources, whilst Cabinet welcomed the report and had no objection to supporting the proposed recommendation and continuation of work in this regard, the Mayor emphasised that the decision to withdraw subsidies to bus companies had been taken by full Council as part of the budget setting process and there was currently no funding available in the current budget to support any transport provision. Should the Council wish to fund transport provision in future, this would be at the expense of another service area and priorities would have to be reviewed.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum into Young People's Access to Transport be approved and adopted:-

- (i) Following consideration of the recommendations at Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, Cabinet is asked to express a clear view in relation to the continuation of work relating to the reinstatement / redevelopment of bus services and/or alternative travel arrangements, where the implementation of recommendations require additional resources;
- (ii) Subject to recommendation 1, the Council explores options to improve young people's access to transport through the transport group, local transport companies and organisations across the town who work with young people and that an update report be brought back to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum detailing all the work that has been carried out in all areas; and
- (iii) The report be presented (by the young people's representatives) to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following further exploration by the Forum of 'low cost travel to young people through concessionary fare schemes'

290. Final Report – Young People's Access to Transport – Action Plan *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Young People's Representatives' investigation into Young People's Access to Transport.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided brief background information into the 'Young People's Access to Transport' Scrutiny Investigation and provided a proposed Action Plan, attached at Appendix A, in response to the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

Decision

The Action Plan, attached at Appendix A in response to the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Young People's Representatives' investigation into 'Young People's Access to Transport', be approved.

291 . Final Report – Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 Year Olds (*Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present the Final Report of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 Year Olds'.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Economic Regeneration Manager presented the report which outlined the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions and subsequent recommendations.

In relation to the current data set out in the report regarding the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), a Member raised concerns regarding the level of unknowns and queried the reasons for such levels. In response, whilst the Economic Regeneration Manager acknowledged the difficulties of tracking individuals, it was highlighted that a substantial amount of work was being undertaken to target hard to reach categories. The Council had seen a reduction in the percentage of 19 – 25 year olds not in education, employment or training and the levels in Hartlepool compared favourably to that of neighbouring authorities.

In response to a request for clarification, the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum highlighted the purpose and benefits of exploring Social Return on Investment of the Connexions Services for 19-25 year olds. The investigation concluded that the Social Return on Investment tool was a useful way of gaining an understanding of the overall value of the Connexions Service and provided Members with a valuable insight into the service. The investigation highlighted that Connexions was providing a very valuable service to 19-25 year olds in a number of areas, in addition to employment and training advice. The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Chair thanked the Scrutiny Support Officer, Elaine Hind, for her hard work and input into the Social Return on Investment report.

The Mayor emphasised the importance of sustainability and monitoring outcomes in relation to investigations of this type including the need to continue to explore the impact on the town as well as the need to monitor individual schemes.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Employment and Training opportunities for 19-25 year olds be approved:-

- (a) That Hartlepool Borough Council liaise with prime providers of the Work Programme to:-
 - (i) ensure prime provider offers are developed which meet local employer needs;
 - (ii) assist Avanta in engaging with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to share data regarding the success of the Work Programme within Hartlepool; and
 - (iii) develop a process to ensure the dissemination of information in relation to the success of the DWP Work Programme in Hartlepool to the Council and the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum, once available.

- (b) That Hartlepool Borough Council facilitate meetings between prime providers of the DWP Work Programmes and third sector providers to:-
 - (i) Promote the specialist support services local organisations are able to provide as sub-contractors; and
 - (ii) Explore options to provide specialist services 'on demand'.

- (c) That the development of a process to hold careers events aimed at schools and sixth form college leavers to promote the types of careers available with local employers and also the routes to access potential opportunities, is explored with local service providers, employers and Connexions;

- (d) That ways of re-invigorating the partnership between Connexions and Job Centre Plus in Hartlepool be explored to ensure consent to share forms are completed and data shared, where possible and in accordance with the data protection act;

- (e) That during the development of skills based training programmes Adult Education and Economic Development liaise to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved for the economic wellbeing of the town;

- (f) That the Economic Development Team works in partnership with prime providers, local suppliers of employment and training services and the Economic Regeneration Forum to promote the Youth Contract, the National Apprenticeship Service and the benefits of employing apprentices to employers;

- (g) That the use of the Social Return on Investment model is explored:-
 - (i) as part of the budget process to provide Members with

- qualitative data upon which to make decisions;
- (ii) to assist in shaping the future of service delivery by evaluating current service provision and gaining a better understanding of the value services users place on the outcomes delivered.

292 . Scrutiny Investigation into Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 Year Olds – Action Plan *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 year olds.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided brief background information into Employment and Training Opportunities for Young People Aged 19-25 scrutiny Investigation and provided a proposed Action Plan, attached at Appendix A, in response to the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

Decision

The Action Plan, attached at Appendix A, in response to the recommendations of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 Year Olds, be approved.

293 . Final Report – Private Sector Housing Schemes *(Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum presented the report which outlined the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions and subsequent

recommendations. The Chair of the Scrutiny Forum highlighted the key issues of the investigation which included selective licensing schemes, landlord accreditation, empty homes initiatives and the good tenant scheme. Since the commencement of the investigation, the Chair was pleased to report the significant progress that had been made in the service delivery of private sector housing schemes since the reorganisation of the department and congratulated the department on this success. Thanks were also expressed to all participants who had contributed to the investigation.

The Mayor welcomed the report and the significant progress that had already been made since the commencement of the investigation emphasising the potential benefits of the report to Cabinet Members in light of the impact of pending changes to the benefits system on private sector housing.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum into Private Sector Housing Schemes as set out below be approved:-

- (a) That the ring-fencing of selective licensing income should continue, to secure the provision of the scheme in the future;
- (b) That representations are made to the Hartlepool MP to lobby for legislation relating to the theft of metal to be strengthened and fines increased;
- (c) That the Housing Services Team undertake awareness raising activities with Hartlepool Borough Council Staff, Elected Members and service users to ensure that the impact of changes to housing benefit legislation are communicated and factored in to advice provided to potential claimants;
- (d) That Hartlepool Borough Council explore methods to introduce and fund a Healthy Homes Scheme in conjunction with NHS Hartlepool;
- (e) That communication with the public is improved to highlight the regeneration benefits that result from the provision of loans and grants to private landlords to renovate properties in specific areas of the town;
- (f) That additional ways to enable landlords to leave feedback for the Good Tenant Scheme, including online methods be explored;
- (g) That the link between poor housing and poor health is recognised in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;

- (h) That the feasibility of including details of the Good Tenant Scheme within housing benefit application packs is assessed;
- (i) That publicity is undertaken to inform private rented tenants of their rights in relation to the condition of their homes and the powers the authority has to ensure landlords maintain properties to a decent standard;
- (j) That Hartlepool Borough Council works with the Probation Service to explore the use of Probation Service risk assessments and information regarding support packages in place for ex-offenders, as part of the Good Tenant Scheme assessment;
- (k) That an invitation is extended to the Probation Service to attend the Landlord Steering Group to further develop the relationship and information sharing practices between the Probation Service, landlords and the Council.

294. Scrutiny Investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes – Action Plan *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the Private Sector Housing Schemes.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided brief background information into the Private Sector Housing Schemes Scrutiny Investigation and provided a proposed Action Plan, attached at Appendix A, in response to the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

Decision

The Action Plan, attached at Appendix A in response to the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes, be approved

295. Final Report – Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services *(Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present the Final report of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Chair of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum presented the report which outlined the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions and subsequent recommendations. The Chair of the Scrutiny Forum informed Members that one of the major issues identified during the investigation, as set out in recommendation (b)(iii), was to ensure the transition from hospital was effectively and efficiently managed by improving communication across all discharge services.

Members welcomed the report acknowledging the importance of early intervention and re-ablement services and the benefits and potential savings in the long-term. Cabinet was keen for the cost benefits of early intervention and re-ablement to the Council and the NHS to be examined in detail for consideration as part of the budget setting process for the following year. The Acting Chief Executive indicated that a report in this regard would be provided in due course.

Decision

That the recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum into Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services as set out below, be approved:-

That the Council implements a co-ordinated approach and in doing so:-

- (i) works with partner organisations and the voluntary and community sector to deliver and promote early intervention and re-ablement services including the use of welfare notices and low level support services; and
 - (ii) identifies as a key priority, the importance of prevention across all Council services
- (b) That the Council works closely with healthcare professionals to prevent future hospital admissions by:-

- (i) developing an early identification process for people who are at risk of major health problems;
 - (ii) regularly monitoring patients and exploring the patients individual needs in depth; and
 - (iii) ensuring the transition from hospital is effectively and efficiently managed by improving communication across all discharge services
- (c) That the Council explores the potential to offer further apprenticeships in social care in the challenging financial climate, and explores how incentives could be used to retain trainees once qualified.

296. Scrutiny Investigation into Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services – Action Plan (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided brief background information into the 'Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services Scrutiny Investigation and provided a proposed Action Plan, attached at Appendix A, in response to the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

Decision

The Action Plan, attached at Appendix A in response to the recommendations of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Early Intervention and Re-ablement Services, be approved.

297. Ward Members' Budgets (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present the Cabinet considerations regarding the implementation of Ward Member budgets for 2012/13.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services referred to the Council meetings on 9 and 23 February where it was proposed and agreed that a ward fund of £181,500 be allocated equally to all Elected Members to directly address specific resident and ward issues. This fund would be created by allocating the under spends from both the Acting Chief Executive arrangements (£76,848) and the Joint Head of HR role (21,402) plus £83,250 from the 2011/12 favourable General Fund outturn for this municipal year.

It was assumed that Ward Member budgets would not be available to be expended on individuals, but were meant to be used for the wider and discernable community benefits for the Ward. Members would be expected to consult with each other to ensure that there was no duplication of expenditure.

It was assumed that the intention was not for Ward Member budgets to be expended on services which were already provided by the Council, unless it was for the purpose of enhancing upon the level of service currently provided. Similarly the funds were not intended to be used to provide services which were provided by other public agencies unless the purpose was to supplement what was already being provided.

It was recognised that Ward Member budgets would need to be subject to various procedural arrangements to ensure accountability and transparency of decision-making. There would need to be a system of reporting back on the use of Ward Member budgets for audit purposes and the scheme would need to be accompanied by guidance to Members on the exercise of these devolved powers as detailed in Appendix 1.

Decisions taken by Ward Members in relation to the expenditure of their local budget would fall outside the stringent rules concerning recording and publication which applied to decisions taken by the Cabinet and Portfolio Holders. This was because the decisions taken by the Ward Members would not constitute 'executive decisions' as they would not involve significant expenditure. Moreover, such decisions would not be subject to call-in. This means that although the recording of the exercise of the devolved powers would be necessary for audit and good governance purposes, it could be less prescriptive than those for executive decisions, Appendix 2 refers.

With regard to Ward Members determining and developing proposals, the importance of the three Ward Councillors working together was highlighted.

In response to a query as to whether the timescales for Members determining priorities was achievable given the forthcoming elections and the settling-in period for any new Councillors, whilst the Assistant Director acknowledged the tight timescales involved, it was pointed out that Neighbourhood Managers were aware of key ward issues and would support new and existing Members in developing proposals.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report, and Members' comments be noted.
- (ii) That the guidance, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.
- (iii) That the delegation of powers to the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services and the recording framework, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be agreed.
- (iv) That the application framework, be approved.

298. Young People's Learning Agency – Youth Contract *(Director of Child and Adult Services and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the current position of the North East local authorities regional submission for the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) Youth Contract.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided background information on the YPLA Youth Contract tender specification which was targeted at addressing youth unemployment following the Government's announcement that almost £1 billion of funding would be allocated to deliver a new Youth Contract over the next three years

The Youth Contract contained three main elements which included additional support for unemployed 18-24 year olds, subsidies for small businesses taking on an Apprentice aged 16-24 and a new programme of additional support aimed at 16-17 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The report included tender specification requirements together with details of the pre-qualification questionnaire submission for the North East with Sunderland City Council leading on writing the application and identified within the bid as the lead accountable body. On 22 March the YPLA informed Sunderland City Council that they had been successful and had

been invited to tender and submit a final application before the deadline of 4 May 2012. The report included details of the delivery and payment model, scale of the contract, commercial timelines, next steps as well as the risk and financial implications.

It was noted that funding was a further opportunity to provide additional provision across the stated ten local authority areas to support young people who were NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

Decision

That the report be noted and further information be awaited.

299. Announcement

The Mayor announced the pending retirement of Councillor Hilary Thompson and expressed his thanks and appreciation for her hard work and dedication in her role as a Cabinet Member and Councillor. The Mayor highlighted that she would be sadly missed and wished her the very best of luck for the future. Councillor Thompson took the opportunity to thank the Mayor for his kind sentiments and concluded by expressing her sincere thanks to officers and colleagues for their invaluable support during her time as a Councillor.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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