

REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD 24 AUGUST 2012

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Peter Frost, Traffic Team Leader
Phil Hepburn, Parking Services Manager
Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Mick Emerson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Business)
Rob Smith, Senior Regeneration Officer
Fiona Stanforth, Regeneration Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

16. Brenda Road Bridge (*Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering)*)

Type of decision

Key Decision. Test (i) applies. Forward Plan Reference No. 15/12

Purpose of report

The report is to seek the Portfolio Holders approval

- (i) to the actions taken and the current position in relation to the structural condition of the Brenda Road Bridge carrying the B1277 over the Network Rail Sunderland to Thornaby Branch Rail Line; and
- (ii) the funding arrangements for these works.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning, reported that Brenda Road Bridge was constructed around 1926 and comprises concrete abutments supporting a steel girder structure with a reinforced concrete deck overlaid with a bituminous carriageway surface. A routine visual inspection of the structure in August 2011 revealed evidence of significant corrosion of parts of the steel structure. At that time an initial assessment of the forecast cost of these works was made and £100,000 was set aside from the revenue budget towards these works. This action was taken to avoid this cost impacting on the 2012/13 budget. As this was a capital scheme these

resources need to be accounted for as a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay within the 2011/12 accounts.

Due to restricted access arrangements had to be made for a more detailed assessment of the bridge during a “track possession” and this had led to a review of the works required. It was proposed to carry out the reported remedial / maintenance works as soon as reasonably practicable. These works would include works to the concrete abutments, repairs to the concrete parapets, repainting of all exposed steel elements and repairs to the bearing and stiffening plates.

The estimated cost of the remedial / maintenance measures identified was of the order of £250k. If the works are not carried out the structure will deteriorate to a point where full replacement may be necessary at a likely cost in the order of £2.5M. As this was a capital scheme and £100,000 had been earmarked as a Revenue Contribution to Outlay. The remaining funding would come from the 2012/13 Local Transport Plan allocation. The budget report approved by Council on 23rd February 2012 allocated authority to approve individual LTP schemes to this Portfolio. A comprehensive report would be submitted on the whole programme to a future meeting.

The Mayor questioned if there were any alternate government funds that could be utilised to source some funding for the scheme. The Assistant Director indicated that all possible sources had been examined.

Decision

1. That the scheme of repairs to the Brenda Road Bridge as reported be approved.
2. That the costs of the works estimated at £250,000 be funded from the £100,000 earmarked as a Revenue Contribution to Outlay and £150,000 from the 2012/13 Local Transport Plan.

17. Hartlepool Retail Revival Strategy *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Portfolio Holder to develop a retail revival strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Senior Regeneration Officer reported that as part of a comprehensive approach to improve the town centre a longer term vision was also required to improve the retail opportunities in the town. This could be achieved through the development of a Retail Revival Strategy which would set out an action plan to improve the town centre, attract additional retailers and create a retail offer that attracts people to the town centre. The strategy would primarily be

focussed on improving retail opportunities and would fit alongside the recommendations of the Central Area Investment Framework regeneration strategy which aims to improve the economic performance of the Central Area of Hartlepool.

The Retail Revival Strategy would identify the main issues within the town centre using research from retailers and consumers. Specialist retail market analysis would be undertaken to identify the key gaps in the town centre offer and how these could be addressed.

The majority of the work could be completed in-house using existing resources, however specialist external input may be required which would have a cost implication. There were a number of existing pieces of research which could be updated and used to form the basis of the study such as the Viewpoint 1000 town centre survey results from 2010. It was proposed to develop a brief to outline the scope of the study. Costs would be obtained for the specialist elements of the work. The brief and costs would be reported to the Portfolio Holder for consideration in September 2012.

The Assistant Director commented that similar studies undertaken elsewhere would be utilised to examine the kinds of proposals that had led to revitalisation. However, these schemes did take up to a decade to show real improvements so all stakeholders, the authority, the public and the business community needed to 'buy-in' to the potentially radical proposals that were required.

The Mayor welcomed the report and indicated that he would support the involvement of a university/college in such a scheme if it brought best value to the study proposals.

Decision

That the preparation of a brief for a Retail Revival Strategy be approved.

18. Stanhope Avenue – Residents Only Permit Parking Scheme *(Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report the outcome of a consultation with residents of Stanhope Avenue regarding the reintroduction of residents only permit parking controls.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Parking Services Manager reported that the issue of Stanhope Avenue parking regulations had been the subject of a number of reports to the Portfolio Holder. The avenue had initially been incorporated within Residents Parking 'Zone A' but was removed after consultation with residents over proposed charge increases in 2008. More recently, residents at the eastern

end of the avenue closets to Osbourne Road had raised complaints in relation to parking problems some of which related to vehicles claimed to be parked there all day to avoid town centre parking charges. This problem was said by residents to be exacerbated by the implementation of additional restrictions on Osbourne Road in 2011.

Further consultation has therefore been carried out with residents who had, by a small majority requested the reintroduction of Stanhope Avenue in Residents Parking 'Zone A'. Details of the consultation and the charges that would apply if the avenue was reintroduced to the parking zone were set out within the report.

The Mayor acknowledged the history of this issue and commented that he would support the proposal on the basis of the consultation responses and hoped that this solution would resolve matters for the residents.

Decision

That the request to reintroduce Stanhope Avenue into the resident only permit controlled parking scheme with affect from 1st October 2012 be approved.

19. Arncliffe Gardens Area – Objections to Proposed One-Way System *(Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the subsequent objections which have been submitted to the Council, following the placing of the legal order/ notice in the appropriate areas. The proposed scheme had been given approval to advertise the orders at the Portfolio meeting of 18th May 2012.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Traffic Team Leader reported that a report had been submitted to the Portfolio meeting of 18th May 2012, seeking approval of the proposed one way system for the four streets in question (Arncliffe Gardens, Wansbeck Gardens, Eamont Gardens and Belmont Gardens). This was subsequently approved by the Portfolio Holder. The consultation exercise for the proposals had shown that there was clear support from residents, for both the overall scheme and within each individual street. The results of the consultation and the proposed one-way scheme were set out within the report.

In February 2012, the then Portfolio Holder asked that a letter be sent to residents of the streets either side of the proposed one way area - Eldon Grove and Lansdowne Road, as a small number of residents had expressed concerns over the scheme. These related to a potential increase in traffic volumes along those two streets if the other roads near to them became one way. It was not intended that Eldon Grove and Lansdowne Road would become one way streets. The response from this consultation showed that

from 114 letters sent out, only 5 residents responded to express concerns.

The Mayor commented that he supported the proposal as it would solve a number of the issues suffered by residents and motorists. The Mayor noted the objections but considered that in light of the overwhelming support the scheme should be adopted.

Decision

That the proposed one way scheme for Arncliffe Gardens, Wansbeck Gardens, Eamont Gardens and Belmont Gardens be implemented, as agreed at the meeting of the Portfolio Holder on 18th May 2012.

20. Community Pool - Category 5a – Development and Investment Grant, Red Dreams Application *(Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to present the application received through Category 5A of the Community Pool for consideration for approval by the Portfolio Holder.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Regeneration Officer reported that Category 5A was specifically for Development and Investment Grants. The aim of these grants was to provide support to groups that wanted to invest and develop in themselves to enable the group to strengthen in the future, putting the group in a stronger position for income generation opportunities and commissioning to deliver services. The maximum grant that an organisation could apply for through this scheme was £8,000. The eligibility criteria were set out in the report.

Red Dreams is a registered charity based in Hartlepool that works with young people aged 19 and under within all areas of creative and performing arts and media. A summary of the application was set out in the report. Supporting appendices to the report set out the full application and financial statements from the group. Those appendices contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)' (para 3).

The Mayor commented that he had visited the current project and was very supportive of their aims and supported the grant request.

Decision

That the grant application submitted for £7,040 from Red Dreams be approved on the basis that the funding would contribute towards the following:

- Volunteer Recruitment and Training;
- Arts Awards;
- Equipment and Software; and
- PQASSO Quality Framework.

21. Community Pool - Category 5b – Emergency Contributions Fund: Owton Manor West Neighbourhood Watch and Residents Association Application *(Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to present the application received through Category 5B of the Community Pool for consideration for approval by the Portfolio Holder.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Regeneration Officer reported that Category 5B was specifically for Emergency Contributions. The aim of these grants was to assist organisations that find themselves in temporary difficult financial situations, and is designed for emergency assistance. Funding support through this grant scheme was not designed as a long term funding solution and it was explicit within the guidelines that applications must clearly outline what has been done and how they were planning to secure additional funding. Any grants awarded through this scheme were for one off support only. The maximum grant that an organisation could apply for through this scheme was £8,000.

A summary of the application was set out in the report. Supporting appendices to the report set out the full application and financial statements from the group. Those appendices contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)' (para 3).

The Regeneration Officer indicated that the group were awaiting the awarding of further funding later in the year which would secure their position for 2013. If this application was approved, officers would work closely with the group to develop a sustainable future. On this basis, the Mayor indicated his support for the application.

Decision

That the application submitted for £7,987 towards core costs be approved to sustain the centre for 22 weeks, which would ensure that the organisation can continue operating until the end of January 2013.

22. Economic Profile – 12 Month Comparison *(Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning))*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to update the Portfolio Holder on the current position of key economic Performance Indicators (PI) and to highlight the progress made within the last twelve months.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Employment Development Officer reported that there continued to be significant progress made on improving the economic landscape of Hartlepool through major initiatives including Regional Growth Funding, Enterprise Zones, the Seaton Carew development, the redevelopment of Hartlepool College of Further Education and Cleveland College of Art and Design, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Get Britain Working Measures, Flexible Support Fund and the Familywise project.

However, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, a review of the comparison between the June 2011 and June 2012 PI highlights that there were still key issues, such as:

- Hartlepool's unemployment rate had increased from 7% to 7.7% within twelve months and was the highest percentage rate increase across the Tees Valley sub-region, North East and Great Britain. This would be tackled through initiatives such as DWP Get Britain Working Measures.
- Hartlepool's long-term unemployment rate had increased from 2.6% to 4.5% within twelve months and was the highest percentage rate across the Tees Valley sub-region, North East and Great Britain. The Work Programme prime providers were accountable for supporting this cohort, however, to date there was no information available on their performance.
- Hartlepool's youth unemployment rate had increased by 1.1% to 15.9% within one year. As of June 2012, Hartlepool had the third highest rate of youth unemployment in the country for 18-24 year olds and was the second highest within the North East region. To counter the high numbers of young people who are unemployed, the Government had announced a number of measures. These included the Youth Contract and Apprentice Grant for Employers (AGE) which would both offer subsidies to employers to employ a young person.
- Hartlepool's employment rate reduced by 3.1 percentage points, which was in line with the Tees Valley and North East rate.
- The number of adults on an out-of-work benefit had increased by 0.2 percentage points to 24.1%, which was less of an increase than the Tees Valley and North East average and in line with Great Britain rate.
- The median gross weekly earnings for Hartlepool residents who were in full-time employment continued to increase and was currently £470.60 per

week. Hartlepool had the second highest median gross weekly earnings within the Tees Valley and was higher than the North East average earnings rate.

- There were increased numbers of live unfilled Job Centre Plus vacancies to 462.
- Although Hartlepool's new business registration rate per 10,000 of population reduced from 32 in 2009 to 29 in 2010, this reduction was in line with the Tees Valley and North East averages.

The Mayor commented that the indicators for Hartlepool reflected the national situation. What would be key in the future was ensuring that the position did not become any worse and that when there was recovery, that Hartlepool did not lag behind other areas in coming out of recession.

The Mayor expressed his concern at the lack of detailed output data from the DWP Avanta contract and requested that officers seek the support of the town's Member of Parliament in sourcing the information.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.37 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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