

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

7 January 2013

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Cath Hill, Children's and Community Services Portfolio Holder
John Lauderdale, Adults and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder
Paul Thompson, Finance and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder

Also present:

Councillor Marjorie James, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee
John Maddison, Mayor's Community Advisory Panel

Officers:

Dave Stubbs, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Peter Devlin, Chief Solicitor
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

140. Apologies for Absence

None.

141. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Paul Thompson declared a prejudicial interest in minute 144.

142. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2012

Received.

143. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013/14 to 2016/17 *(Corporate Management Team)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To provide Members with an update on the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Due to the timing of the Cabinet meetings, the report had been provided to update Members on any issues that may not have been available to them at the previous meeting of Cabinet on 21 December 2012. However, as Members had been provided with an up to date appraisal of the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement at its previous meeting, the report was not required and therefore withdrawn from consideration at this meeting.

Decision

In view of Cabinet's full consideration of the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement announcement at its previous meeting, this report was withdrawn from consideration.

Councillor Paul Thompson left the meeting at this point due to his earlier declaration of interest.

144. Community Pool 2013/214 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference RN 30/12.

Purpose of report

To feed back to Cabinet on the Community Pool processes and allocations for 2012/13 and to present proposals for the suggested allocations of Community Pool budget and approval processes for 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The current approach to commissioning the Community Pool budget which was approved by Cabinet on 21 November 2012 was outlined in the report along with the formal procurement process undertaken to award categories 1, 2 and 3 via contracts. Given the level of demand, approval was given to 9 of the 19 category 4 projects received totalling £151,529. In addition one development and one investment grant and two emergency grants had been approved. As a result, the current funding remaining in category 5 was £29,836 although this was subject to change due to ongoing enquiries into this funding.

It was noted that several issues had been highlighted during the operation of the community pool during 2012/13 and a number of measures had been introduced to deal with these issues and they were detailed in the report.

Cabinet were asked to consider the proposal that allocation of the budget for next year would follow the same principle as this year to allocate £150,000 to Category 4 and the reserve plus inflation to be allocated to Category 5. It was also proposed to introduce a maximum grant level of £15,000 for Category 4 which could enable a minimum of 10 projects to benefit from Category funding in 2013/14.

It was highlighted to Members that there were two grant streams in Category 5: the provision of development/investment grants; and an emergency fund. It was proposed to reduce the maximum grant available through Category 5 to £5,000 to maximise the remaining funding in the budget to benefit more VCS groups. Section 6 of the report outlined the assessment and approval processes for funding from Categories 4 and 5.

The timescales for Category 4 and 5 grant payments were outlined in the report and noted that whilst payments on Category 4 would be made week commencing 8 April 2013, applications for Category 5 could be considered at any time throughout the year.

In response to questions from a Member, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that a new system to evaluate and cross reference other HBC funding provided to VCS groups applying to the Community Pool had been introduced and this would be tightened up with additional checks to be incorporated. Whilst it was acknowledged that there were other organisations available to assist VCS groups with their applications for funding, there had been occasions when Council officers had needed to spend time to assist applicants with emergency funding applications.

A Member noted that additional stages in the pre-application process were to be included to assist applicants including an informal assessment meeting, however, it was suggested that this meeting should be a formal

meeting to highlight the importance of the process being followed. In addition, in response to a Member question, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that where the appropriate Portfolio Holder or Committee Chair declared an interest in a particular application, the Mayor or Leader of the Council would consider that grant application.

There was some concern expressed by a Member that some organisations may not be as aware of their finances as they could be and may come to rely on emergency funding. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that wherever possible, organisations were signposted to other funding streams rather than the emergency funding.

In relation to the proposed limit of £15k maximum grant level for Category 4, it was noted that the average grant application received was for £21k and it was suggested that some organisations could view this as a cut in financial support. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that the proposals would provide structure and guidance to organisations and ensure that the Community Pool provided effective financial support to as many organisations as possible. It was suggested that feedback on the process followed should be obtained from all organisations applying to the Community Pool to help highlight any issues and ensure the Community Pool was utilised to maximise the potential benefits to organisations.

Decision

- 1) The split of the budget to use £150,000 to Category 4 and reserve plus inflation to Category 5 was approved.
- 2) The introduction of a maximum grant for Category 4 of £15,000 was approved.
- 3) A reduction in the maximum grant through Category 5 to £5,000 was approved.
- 4) The assessment and approval processes as outlined in Section 6 of this report was approved.
- 5) The Timescales as outlined in Section 7 of this report were noted.

Councillor Paul Thompson rejoined the meeting.

145. City Deal (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference RN 31/12.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the progress of City Deal, provide an outline of the proposed Tees Valley City Deal expression of interest process and seek

initial comments from Cabinet

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided the background to the proposed Tees Valley City Deal expression of interest. It was confirmed that the Tees Valley draft offer had been prepared and provided a broad flavour of the expression of interest for discussion with partners. Should this expression of interest meet with Government approval, Tees Valley would then be required to submit a formal, detailed proposal for consideration. Given the nature, complexity and sensitivity of the exercise, although the report did not include any detailed proposals, the key challenges and opportunities were outlined.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning highlighted that should the Tees Valley bid for a City Deal be successful, there was an expectation that certain powers and budget responsibilities would be devolved to the body established to deliver the City Deal. Whilst Members appreciated the benefits a successful City Deal bid could bring to the area and recognised that the management of a City Deal would be on a Tees Valley basis, they were keen to see that the maximum benefits for Hartlepool should be achieved. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that discussions were ongoing in relation to the terms of the proposal to ensure the authority were entirely satisfied with the arrangements which would need to be agreed before the bid was finalised.

Decision

The submission of an 'Expression of Interest' for City Deal from Tees Valley was approved, which if successful would result in a more detailed application being put together in full consultation with all 5 Tees Valley local authorities.

146. Localism Act 2011 – Community Right to Bid (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as it had been considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2012.

147. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Flexible Support Fund (FSF) *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the progress and performance of the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) for Hartlepool and Tees Valley.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report confirmed that the FSF would be delivered until March 2013 and the agreed delivery criteria was detailed in the report. The current performance was attached at Appendix 1 and it was noted that between April and October 2012, 306 eligible customers were engaged on the project with 114 employed as a result of the up skilling grant use; of this 25 apprenticeships were created. The total income received from DWP to date was £291,662 across all five Local Authorities with the Hartlepool income element being £78,329 which included the Contract Officer costs and co-ordination fee. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that whilst Hartlepool had achieved the individual targets set, the Tees Valley wide targets had not been achieved. In response to a Member's concern at the Tees Valley targets, the Assistant Director confirmed that some authorities were more prepared than others. However, Members were informed that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) may extend the timescales to ensure targets were achieved or may re-profile the current targets and give additional targets to some authorities.

It was recognised that the biggest challenge was getting people into schemes or placements. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that with a proven track record, officers were currently engaging with businesses with regard to securing placements, despite the difficult economic climate. A Member questioned was the incentives were for companies to offer placements in view of previous negative publicity around 'cheap labour'. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that subsidies, paid staff and training providers were available to employers offering placements. It was noted that employers were keen to engage as the FSF had a high success rate of providing suitable employees.

However, a Member was concerned that employers may offer placements in order to secure incentives but release the placement once the incentives

were realised. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning indicated that whilst this was always a risk, employers with a good reputation were approached and were keen to engage and offer opportunities of employment and training. Members were informed that whilst every effort was made to utilise the maximum funding for Hartlepool, one of the positives of the FSF scheme was that it was flexible and there was no pressure to achieve the targets.

Decision

The report was noted.

148. Tees Valley Enterprise Zone – Hartlepool Progress Update *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the progress of Hartlepool's Enterprise Zones.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report confirmed the two types of Enterprise Zones approved in Hartlepool as:

- Capital Allowance Site – Port Estates
- Business Rates Discount Site – Queens Meadow.

Members were informed that three projects had benefitted from the above Enterprise Zones with an application for a fourth project currently being processed. The report provided Members with an update on the potential offshore wind projects currently under consideration.

Whilst Members recognised the continuing success of the Enterprise Zones, there were some concerns at the net jobs created in view of recent closures in businesses in the town. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning indicated that a report including the balanced figures of job creations and losses in the town would be provided to the next meeting of Cabinet.

In relation to the port area, the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning commented that the City Deal bid, discussed earlier in the meeting, may provide an opportunity for future investment in the port area

around the renewable energy sector. It was suggested that Members may wish to consider approaching the Government to extend the life of the Enterprise Zones in order to secure longer term investments from larger companies.

A Member questioned whether there had been any announcements from the Government on the future energy sector around nuclear, wind and renewables. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that guidance from Government Policy on the future energy sector was awaited to enable companies to make long term decisions.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) That a further report including the detailed net figures of job creation/losses in Hartlepool be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet.

149. Think Family/Think Communities Plan (Troubled Families Programme) Update *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with a progress update in relation to the delivery of the *Think Family/Think Communities Plan* (Troubled Families Programme).

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The report provided the background to the implementation of the Think Families/Think Communities Plan (Troubled Families Programme) which was approved by Cabinet in May 2012. The report highlighted the criteria for identifying the families to be targeted by the programme and it was hoped that a third of the 290 families identified would be worked with over year one. The report outlined the Local Delivery Model to be utilised in implementing the programme and included qualitative monitoring, performance management, financing and the restorative practice.

Members were informed that progress updates in relation to programme performance would ensure the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and Cabinet was fully appraised on progress, including the number of families engaged, results claimed, interventions known to be working (successes) and

efficiency savings.

A Member sought further information on the number of families supported by this programme, including the families being supported as part of the Early Intervention Strategy and what progress had been made securing the external provider. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that the process to secure an external provider for the provision of Restorative practice training had been approved by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and was currently being undertaken through e-quotes. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that a report would be provided in May/June and would include a full evaluation of year 1 of the implementation of the Early Intervention Strategy.

A Member referred to figure 2 in the report and was concerned at the number of caseloads being dealt with at any one time. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that across the three year programme, families would fluctuate between different triage groups resulting in the numbers in each area being flexible at any one time. Additional training was being provided to officers to enable more flexible working with greater freedom to assist with the management of workloads. Members were keen to see sufficient resources utilised to ensure generational problems were dealt with. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services recognised that achieving sustainable change was a long term strategy, a process was being undertaken to ensure short term interventions had long term benefits with the programme evolving and responding to a continually changing need.

In relation to payment by results, a Member sought clarification on the definition of a result. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that the criteria and outputs were set by the Government, eg 6 months without any anti-social behaviour. However, it was hoped that the programme and existing strategy would facilitate a change in culture with organisations working together to achieve the required outcomes. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning indicated that there were diversionary opportunities available to the authority through placement opportunities with the provision of meaningful skills for unemployed people who meet the criteria for the programme.

It was noted that through the Community Safety Partnership, the Team Around the Households (TAH) were already working with 7 families and this had proved successful although resource intensive and involved a number of different agencies working in partnership. It was envisaged that the Troubled Families Programme would build on the success of the TAH and expand the work currently being undertaken. However, Members had a number of concerns at the resources that would be required to effectively implement the programme.

Decision

- (i) The report and Members' comments were noted.
- (ii) A report would be provided in May/June and would include a full evaluation of year 1 of the implementation of the Early Intervention Strategy.

150. Innovation Fund *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update Cabinet on the outcome of Tees Valley Unlimited's (TVU) application to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Innovation Fund.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Members were reminded that in May 2011 the Government announced a package of measures to help address youth unemployment. This included a new 'Innovation Fund' to support social investment projects in targeted geographical areas. The Fund was commissioned via two rounds: round one focussed on 14-24 year olds and round two focussed on disadvantaged young people aged 14 and 15 and improving their attendance, attitude and behaviour at school.

Cabinet were aware that on 2 April 2012 Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) had applied to the Innovation Fund under round two and the detailed of the application were outlined in the report. On 30 October 2012 the TVU were informed that the application had proved unsuccessful. It was confirmed that the TVU application had been the only application within this geographical area. However, should any further opportunities for funding applications be made available in the future, Cabinet would be informed.

Members were disappointed that the application had been successful, especially due to the high unemployment rates in the region and feedback on the TVU application from the DWP was requested. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning confirmed that the feedback from the DWP would be collated and forwarded to all Members for comments.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) That feedback on the TVU application to the Innovation Fund be requested from the DWP and forwarded to Members for comments.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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