

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

5 June 2006

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves, Children's Services Portfolio Holder,

Robbie Payne Culture, Housing and Transportation Portfolio Holder,

Victor Tumilty, Culture, Leisure and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer
Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Dave Stubbs, Head of Environmental Management
Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement and Property Services
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Julian Heward, Assistant Public Relations Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies For Absence

Councillors Cath Hill (Deputy Mayor), Peter Jackson (Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder) and Ray Waller (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).

2. Declarations of interest by members

None

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2006

Confirmed.

4. New Deal for Communities – Community Housing Plan – Thornton Street Update *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services / Head of Environment Management)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – tests (i) and (ii) apply.

Purpose of report

To request Cabinet approval to use an element of the resources available for housing market renewal 2006-8 to enable this project to be moved forward, ahead of detailed consideration of future spending priorities in respect of a range of potential HMR activity over this same time period

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

Cabinet considered New Deal For Communities Housing Plan situation in respect of Thornton Street at its meeting on 29 March 2006. The area assessment report had suggested the retention of the south side of Thornton Street for possible improvements/ refurbishment, and some demolition to the north side be pursued to create a linear park, which could as well as contribute toward an uplift of the immediate street environment. This idea had received strong community support during consultations on the outcomes of the area assessments later in 2004. In order to make progress with the linear park, a Thornton Street project group comprising local residents, Hartlepool Revival, NDC and HBC officers had been established in 2005, and had produced a draft work programme to progress the consultation and design of the proposed park.

Within the indicative boundary, Hartlepool Revival owned all but 10 of the property interests within the area proposed for the linear park. No resources had been identified to support the acquisition of these specific properties. There were a number of emerging and existing schemes that could potentially be in competition for limited resources, and decisions regarding priorities would need to be made in the near future without prejudice to that process, Cabinet was requested to agree to the principle of supporting this project, subject to confirmation of the availability of resources.

Councillor Payne indicated that he was concerned that this scheme should only go ahead should consultation show that it was what the residents wanted. There was already local concern at the potential impact on traffic and access. The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) assured Cabinet that this meeting was only being asked to agree to support the project in principle. Once the consultation exercise was completed and a 'finalised' scheme proposed, there would be a further report to Cabinet.

Decision

Cabinet approved the use of an element of confirmed resources available for housing market renewal to enable this project to be progressed, ahead of further detailed consideration of future spending priorities.

5. Friarage Manor House and Surrounding Land (*Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The report sought Cabinet endorsement to the development brief for the Friarage Manor House and surrounding land, which will be used to assist the marketing and development of the land. This follows representations emerging from the consultation process and subsequent amendments made to the draft brief.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

On the 27th February 2006 Cabinet approved a draft development brief for the Friarage and surrounding land and gave authorisation to carry out public consultation. This was to allow the local community and others to express their views on the draft brief. The public consultation event ran from Monday 3rd April to Friday 28th April 2006. The consultation was centred on an exhibition placed in the foyer of the Borough Hall, Middlegate on the Headland, which is open to the public.

The consultation process generated considerable interest and over 40 copies of the brief were taken away by residents, 16 detailed response forms, one e-mail and numerous phone calls were returned. Responses were also received from a range of groups and individuals including, Friends of the Friarage Manor House, Hartlepool Headland History Group, Hartlepool Civic Society, Durham County Rugby Football Union and local residents. A brief outline of the responses returned was set out in the report. The consultation responses also highlighted what the respondents believed to be unsuitable developments and uses for the site. High Density housing and flats had a number of objections and there was a negative response to the suggestion of possible small-scale retail or offices.

In response to the suggestions made in the consultation process, amendments have been made to the brief to include additional information in the introduction and context section to clarify the development process and to encourage developers to consult with local people on development proposals. Once approved the brief can be used by the landowners - the Henry Smith Education and Non Education Trusts - to assist in the marketing of the land. To assist in the exploration of potential uses, the Council along with the North Hartlepool Partnership have agreed funding for a study which would assess the feasibility of a number of potential community uses for the Manor House which have emerged from informal discussions. A brief for this work is currently being prepared and it is hoped that this study will progress quickly. This will, however, potentially extend the lead-in period for the marketing of the land which would increase the risk of work not being completed within the THI timeframe.

Decision

Cabinet approved the development brief and authorised officers to support the land marketing process.

6. Outcomes and Proposed Action Plan from the Joint Cabinet / Scrutiny Event *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report the agreed outcomes of the Joint Cabinet and Scrutiny Member Event held on 13 February 2006, together with a proposed Action Plan that addresses those issues.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

In consultation with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet Members, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, Chairs of the four standing Scrutiny Forums and key officers, arrangements were finalised for the Joint Cabinet / Scrutiny Event to be held on the evening 13 February 2006. A summary of the issues raised during the Cabinet / Scrutiny Joint Event were outlined in the report and an Action Plan addressing the outcomes of the event was set out in section 7 of the report. Scrutiny Coordinating Committee had commented in relation to the actions set out under (e) in the action plan, that they would wish to see, initially, that joint Cabinet / Scrutiny meetings held on a quarterly basis. The Committee had also suggested that informal meetings between officers and Scrutiny Forum Chair's be held on a regular basis.

The Mayor indicated that while supporting meetings between the Executive and Scrutiny, he considered that a meeting every six months would suffice. He did agree that should additional meetings be warranted, they could be held.

Decision

Cabinet endorsed the proposed Action Plan, though, considered that joint Cabinet and Scrutiny sessions be organised twice each year, the first meeting being early in each new Municipal Year, with additional meetings being held should the need arise.

7. Corporate Plan (BVPP) 2006/07 (*Scrutiny Coordinating Committee*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The Corporate Plan was considered by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on the 19 May 2006. Scrutiny Coordinating Committee's formal response is presented for the consideration of Cabinet.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Corporate Plan was considered by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2006. Issues raised at that meeting were set out for the consideration of Cabinet. Scrutiny Coordinating Committee made the following specific comments: -

Performance Indicator Outturn Figures & Targets - Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee noted that a small number of key performance indicator outturn figures and targets were not included in the draft plan. The Committee agreed to receive this information once it is available.

Jobs & Economy Theme –VAT Registrations - Under the jobs and economy theme (Ref – JE1), Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee queried the accuracy of measuring new business start-ups according to VAT registrations. A Member suggested that form CWF1, which is used to register businesses with the Inland Revenue would be a more accurate tool by which to measure small business start-ups.

Officers accepted that VAT registrations are not the most accurate method by which to measure new business start-ups however, the approach adopted reflected one used nationally. Members were informed that locally, this issue has been highlighted with GONE (Government Office North-East) and the Inland Revenue and is in the process of being reviewed. Meanwhile proxy measures are in place to ensure an accurate record of business start-ups is maintained.

Community Safety Theme - Under the Community Safety theme (Ref - CS5) Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee noted the commitment to contribute to the success of the Neighbourhood Policing pilot and considered that this would assist greatly in making people feel safer in Hartlepool.

The Assistant Chief Executive commented that all of the points raised by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee were being addressed within the Corporate Plan that was to be submitted to Council.

Decision

1. That Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be thanked for its report.
2. That Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be informed that the comments it has raised will be addressed in the Corporate Plan to be submitted to Council.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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