

REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

8th March 2013

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

Present:

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

Officers: Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Transportation and Engineering
Antony Steinberg, Economic Regeneration Manager
Chris Pipe, Planning Services Manager
Garry Hutchison, Building Control Manager
Joanne Burnley, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Mick Emerson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Business)
Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager
Peter Frost, Traffic Team Leader
Rachael White, Democratic Services Officer

59. Additional Highway Maintenance Funding 2013-14 & 2014-15 *(Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods))*

Type of decision

Key Decision (test (i) & (ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. RN03/13

Purpose of report

To provide details of additional funding identified in the Chancellor's autumn statement and to seek approval for this to be used to enhance the five year highway maintenance program for 2013-14.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on the 5th December 2012, Hartlepool Borough Council was allocated a total of £221,000 from the Government investment to improve the highway network and reduce congestion. The funding was to be split over two years (2013/14 and 2014/15) and it was the Local Authorities responsibility to target the extra funding to where it was most needed. It was proposed that the additional funding be added to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital funding for each year as it had been established that better value for money was achieved by

undertaking permanent resurfacing schemes rather than repairing individual potholes. This would allow for additional schemes to be undertaken in each year.

Decision

The additional highway maintenance allocations for 2013/14 and 2014/15 be added to the existing highway maintenance capital funding.

60. Building Control – Removal of Statutory Notification for Building Regulation Inspections *(Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

For Information

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder in respect of the recent changes made to the Building Control system by the Government in relation to 'improving the Local Authority Building Control processes' and in particular the change to Regulation 16 of The Building Regulations titled 'Notice on commencement and completion of certain stages of work' coming into force on the 6th April 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

As a result of the changes implemented by the Government, Regulation 16 of the Building Regulations which covers the 'Notice of commencement and completion of certain stages of work' had been dramatically altered. Currently the Council had to be notified at various stages throughout construction / building work. These stages were known as 'statutory notifications' and once notified by the builder / owner, the Council would inspect these elements to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. The amendment removed the need for the current statutory notifications and replaced them with a service plan, which was to be determined by the Local Authority. The umbrella body for all Local Authorities, Local Authority Building Control (LABC), had been developing national documentation to assist all local authorities to implement the changes in a suitable manner. Hartlepool Borough Council was currently contributing to the development of this documentation. It was therefore proposed that the Council adopt the use of the LABC guidance to assist in the provision of service plans for various building works in the borough.

Decision

The use of the Local Authority Building Control guidance documents was adopted.

61. Coastal Community Funding 2013/14 – Round 2

(Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update regarding Round 1 of Coastal Community and a possible project idea for Round 2 funding.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

After submitting an expression of interest for a programme aimed at completing the Seaton Carew Masterplan work in Round 1 of the Coastal Community Fund, the Department were informed in June 2012 that they were unsuccessful. From the available information released very few 'programme' schemes were given approval in Round 1 and the majority of successful bids were more focused, single-faceted projects clearly demonstrating the delivery, aims and objectives of the programme. In preparation for Round 2, Officers in the Economic Regeneration Team had been considering a project that would fit the aims of the fund and the evolving plans for Seaton Carew and the wider area. The second bid would be based on the development of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) hub/centre promoting the opportunities and benefits of the STEM subjects which would link in with the Seaton Carew Masterplan and the surrounding area. As Seaton Carew was a coastal location, it would allow links with industries such as nuclear, engineering oil and gas and could link to the Nuclear Power Visitors Centre, Saltholme and the Hartlepool Maritime Experience.

The Portfolio Holder expressed concern at focusing a STEM programme at Seaton Carew with several projects already underway which were aimed at the visitor economy. The Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) and the Principal Economic Development Officer (Business) advised that the Department were looking at the feasibility of the scheme and that the concept would be interactive for young people, families and visitors to the town incorporating educational activities. The Portfolio Holder was advised that there was currently no confirmation of the timetable for the submission but the Department were assuming that the timetable would be similar to the previous year and the bid would need to be prepared and submitted by the end of April 2013.

Decision

(i) The results of Round 1 were noted.

(ii) Approval was given for officers to continue to assess the project idea with colleagues, partners and industry and educational representatives.

62. High Street Innovation Fund – Events, Specialist Markets and Business Support Package *(Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To seek approval from the Portfolio Holder to hold a series of events and specialist markets in the town centre using funding from the High Street Innovation Fund.

The report also sought approval from the Portfolio Holder for a package of support aimed at attracting businesses to occupy vacant town centre units. It is proposed to provide financial assistance with rent and rates using funding from the High Street Innovation Fund.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

As previously reported to the Portfolio Holder in May 2012, Hartlepool was awarded £100,000 through the High Street Innovation Fund which was launched by the Government. An additional £10,000 was also awarded to Hartlepool through the Governments Town Team Partners Initiative. To date £20,000 had been approved from the High Street Innovation Fund for the 'Grow Your Own retailers' enterprise project that enabled individuals to start retail business in the Indoor Market and Middleton Grange Shopping Centre. An overview of this project was provided. A further £5000 was also allocated to improve the signage for the town centre car parks. It was proposed that the £25,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund would be allocated to a business support package to provide incentive for businesses to move into vacant town centre premises. Further details were provided in the report.

In order to improve the retail offer of the town centre it was suggested that a series of specialist markets and events be held to attract people to the town centre and raise awareness of the existing retail offer. It was proposed that three main anchor events be held throughout 2013 which would be supplemented by a series of smaller events throughout the year. In depth detail was provided in relation to the proposals outlining the dates and themes of the individual events. The Portfolio Holder was informed that Church Square had been chosen as the preferred location for the three anchor events and the feasibility of using Victoria Square and other locations within the town centre for smaller scale events would be examined.

Decision

(i) The £50,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund and £10,000 from the Town Team Partners Initiative be used for the specialist markets and events.

(ii) The delivery of three anchor events in Church Square was approved.

(iii) The £25,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund be used for the delivery of a package of support for vacant town centre premise.

63. North East Private sector Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy (*Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To seek the Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder's approval to adopt the updated version of the North East Private Sector Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

In depth detail regarding the key changes to the previous Financial Assistance Policy was outlined in the report. At the beginning of January 2013, Hartlepool had approximately £75,000 of unallocated funding in the regional loans pot of which a proportion would be used to administer loans. Each Local Authority was expected to pay a fee per loan administered which was estimated at £6,000 at the start of April 2012 and was based on the number and type of loans expected to be offered. A breakdown of the loans provided up to December 2012 was provided. As the Department opted to administer separate incentive schemes in relation to the administration of empty homes loans, it would not be affected by the proposed policy changes. The balance of funding outstanding and the expected distribution of loans suggested that whilst there would be an increase in income generated, it would not be significant.

Decision

The adoption of version 20 of the North East Private Sector Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy was approved.

64. Community Pool – Category 5B – Emergency Contributions Fund – Red Dreams (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to present an application received from Red Dreams through Category 5B of the Community Pool to the Portfolio Holder for ratification further to the grant approval made on 5th February 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

It was noted that Category 5B was specifically for Emergency Contributions. The aim of the grant was to assist organisations that were in temporary difficult financial situations. Red Dreams was a registered charity and had previously received a Development and Investment grant through Category 5A of the Community Pool. This funding was to assist Red Dreams move into a larger premises enabling them to offer a broader range of services to the young people accessing the charity. This funding had been utilised in accordance with the offer letter and a full project monitoring visit was scheduled for April 2013. However the move into the new premises took longer than expected and resulted in a delay in the premises opening. This resulted in a reduction of income to the charity and therefore the application had been submitted for emergency grant funding. This would cover the cost of two salaries and three months of insurance, marketing and publicity.

Decision

The Emergency Contributions Grant funding be approved.

65. Quarterly Housing Report (*Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non Key

Purpose of report

To update the Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder about progress across key areas of the Housing Service relating to empty homes, enforcement activity, selective licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing allocations and housing advice & homelessness prevention during the third quarter of 2012/13.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Principal Environmental Health Officer provided an update on the following areas:

- Empty Homes
- Enforcement
- Selective Licensing
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Benchmarking Data
- Allocations Summary
- Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Activity
- Housing Reports on Forward Plan

Further details were included in the report.

Decision

The contents of the report were noted.

66. Tees Valley Design Review Arrangements *(Assistant Director – Regeneration and Planning)*

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To provide information to the Portfolio Holder on the requirement for Councils to have local design review arrangement in place in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and seek agreement to signing a memorandum of understand relating to this requirement (**Appendix 1**).

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The National Planning Policy Framework required Councils to have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design in planning. It was considered by the Tees Valley Planning Managers that it would be good practice to have a coordinated Tees Valley approach. A representative from the North East Design Review Service met with the Planning Managers on how they could assist to establish a review service; however this was focused on Local Planning Authorities subscribing and paying for the service. After further discussions it was proposed that the Tees Valley Authorities enter a Memorandum of Understanding without cost to secure the arrangements of design review. The Planning Services Manager advised that since the report was produced Darlington Borough Council had withdrawn from the agreement.

Decision

Approval was given to adopt the Tees Valley approach to the design review arrangements.

67. Street Naming and Numbering Charges *(Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To set out a proposed range of charges to be introduced for the function of street naming and numbering. It is recommended that these charges to be introduced from 1 April 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Street Naming and numbering was a function carried out by the Council in relation to all new developments and those circumstances where householders seek to re-name/number their property. Following a comparative exercise with the other authorities, it was proposed to introduce the following charges:

- Large developments £150 per new road name and £10 per plot
- Small developments which do not include a new road name: £70 per property
- Re-naming/re-numbering a property £30

The Portfolio Holder queried the procedure and restrictions behind the naming of streets. The Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering) advised that any concerns would be raised in discussions with the developer and would be part of the final agreement where possible.

Decision

Approval was given for the Council to charge for the function of Street Naming and Numbering from the 1st April 2013.

68. Town Centre Traffic Signals Improvements *(Assistant Director – Transportation and Engineering)*

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To seek approval for traffic signal alterations, to reduce delays and improve traffic management around the town centre.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A review of key junctions in the town centre area had been undertaken to determine where further improvements could be made. The proposals were as follows:

York Road / Park Road Junction – re-allocated the lanes so that the left hand lane would be for vehicles turning left into York Road and the right lane would be traffic travelling straight on. The right turn ban in place for vehicles turning from York Road west into Park Road would remain in force.

York Road / Victoria Road Junction – re-allocate in a similar manner, left hand

lane used for vehicles turning left into York Road and the right hand lane for traffic travelling straight on, plus right turning buses. The right turn restriction in place for vehicles turning from York Road east into Victoria Road would remain in force.

A689 / Hucklehoven Way Junction – the current junction operated with northbound and southbound flows on separate phases with dedicated right turn manoeuvres. Propose that the operation of the signals change to run the northbound and southbound directions at the same time.

The Portfolio Holder queried why traffic could not turn right from Park Road onto York Road. The Traffic Team Leader advised that this restriction had been in place for several years and when reviewing the junction it was not considered that this option would not make a significant difference. The Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering) advised that the right turn into York Road was already abused and that it would be monitored and that there were concerns that by allowing all traffic to run right as this could cause further queuing.

In relation to York Road / Victoria Road, the Portfolio Holder reported that many vehicles would travel straight over towards Grange Road and do a u-turn in order to turn right onto York Road and queried whether the restrictions on turning right could be reviewed.

Decision

- (i) The traffic signal improvements were approved.
- (ii) That the signal operations in the town centre area be monitored.

69. Hartlepool Borough Council CCTV Strategy and Protocols 2012-2015 Action Plan Update *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of decision

Non Key Decision

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the development of the Community Safety CCTV Service and outcomes of the CCTV Action Plan (attached at **Appendix 1**) contained in the refreshed CCTV Strategy and Protocols 2012 - 2015.

To consider pursuing a joint CCTV maintenance tender as one of several measures aimed at ensuring the future sustainability of the CCTV system.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Community Safety CCTV Service consists of 132 public space CCTV

cameras which were managed by Hartlepool Community Safety Team and connected to the Community Monitoring Centre which was monitored by Housing Hartlepool under a Services Level Agreement. After recommendations from the Portfolio Holder in June 2012 to refresh the CCTV Strategy and Action Plan, the strategy, action plan and protocols were approved by Cabinet in October 2012. A detailed progress update on the CCTV Action Plan was provided outlining various aspects such as:

- Appropriate commissioning of cameras
- Improving public and partner understanding
- Effective usage and robust evidence of the effective CCTV system
- Investment for community benefit

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods advised that by significantly reducing costs, the expansion of the CCTV Wireless Project would contribute to the future sustainability of the Council's CCTV system. It was considered that a joint CCTV maintenance contract with Stockton Borough Council and others may result in further efficiencies in the future and the Portfolio Holder was asked to approve the proposal of a joint contract.

Decision

Approval was given for a joint CCTV maintenance contract to be pursued.

The meeting concluded at 10.52

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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